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THE STORY OF BRITAIN

VOLUME I

By the Same Author

THE STORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE FALL OF ROME

With seventy-eight illustrations.
Large crown 8vo, 256 pages.

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THE STORY OF BRITAIN

VOLUME I
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO 1485

BY

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PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to cover the main features of British history, in their European setting, from the earliest times down to 1485. As such, it can be used either as a first book in history or as a sequel to the author's earlier volume, *The Story of the Ancient World*. It differs from many British histories in two ways.

In the first place, without becoming a European history, it devotes more attention to affairs on the Continent than the average British history does. It has been the author's aim to mention all the main facts of European history that can reasonably be expected in a volume of this size whose emphasis is laid upon our own islands. The close connexion between events here and events abroad is also fully shown. The British Isles are not treated as lands apart from the rest of Europe—but are shown as sharing to the full in the main developments abroad, whether they be the calamities of the Dark Ages, the emergence of characteristic institutions like the Catholic Church and Feudalism, or the later growth of strong nation-states.

In the second place, the subject-matter has been broadened to include many other than the merely political or military events of history. While these have not been neglected, room has been found for the other main elements of medieval life: the growth of national languages and literature; the Papacy and the Catholic Church; the feudal structure of society; the glories of Gothic architecture; the rise of schools and universities; and the activities of merchants and craftsmen.

As with the author's earlier volume, the appeal to the child and the needs of the classroom have been borne in mind. There are numerous illustrations and maps, with

time-charts placed at the end of the book, and the text has been enlivened by the inclusion of some of the best-known medieval legends and stories. Questions and exercises have been placed at the end of each chapter, and an attempt has been made in a slight degree to grade the difficulties of the language. With the aid of the index, which has been compiled along generous lines, it is hoped that children who work under the Dalton and similar plans will find the book particularly useful.

I am much indebted to my father and to Mr John Lord for help and advice in revising the proofs.

H. A. C.

January, 1939

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THE STORY OF BRITAIN

PART I

BRITAIN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC BRITAIN

The Influence of Geography on History

"HISTORY is governed by geography," a great modern historian[1] has said. In early times the chief centres of civilization, Egypt and Mesopotamia, grew up along river-valleys; the island of Crete and the coastal district of Phœnicia produced great sailors; the mountains of Greece prevented the Greek cities from uniting under one Government; the Mediterranean Sea became the natural centre of the Roman world. As man has progressed he has been able in some measure to alter his environment to suit his needs. He has drained swamps, irrigated deserts, constructed roads, canals, and bridges, and bored tunnels through the mountains. But man is still at the mercy of many of the forces of Nature: the tides, the seasons, rain and sunshine, storm and drought. These still influence his activities, and thus, of course, his history.

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, in the dim beginnings of human history, the British Isles were joined to the mainland. There was then no North Sea, English Channel, or Irish Sea; the Thames joined a northern extension of the River Rhine, which discharged itself into the distant Arctic Ocean. In this age communication between the rest of

[1] G. M. Trevelyan, *History of England.*

Europe and our own country was relatively easy. Then, at some period which cannot be definitely fixed, but which seems to have occurred between the Old and the New Stone Ages, the north-west of Europe sank about 600 feet, and the North and Irish Seas and English Channel were formed. The British Isles had come into being—a geographical fact which has had an enormous influence upon our history. Henceforth invaders had to cross the sea to our country, and although they managed to come, they came in fewer numbers than to any of the other important countries of Europe. Since the Norman Conquest this country alone has been free from foreign invasion, while many of its inhabitants have adopted the surrounding sea as their home and have made Britain the greatest naval power in history.

One other important fact should be remembered. Broadly speaking, the north and west of our country are mountainous, the south and east flat. This has made it easier for invaders from the Continent to settle in those parts, the south and east, that they would first reach after crossing the sea; while the mountainous north and west have provided places of refuge, when needed, for the previous inhabitants. We shall see the influence of these facts when we come to the Anglo-Saxon and Danish invasions.

Prehistoric Times

Our knowledge of history is based upon all kinds of evidence: written and printed documents, material objects, traditions, and the like. There is one broad distinction to be borne in mind. For many hundreds of thousands of years man could not write and could thus leave no written records of his activities. This age is known as the *prehistoric* period. How can we find out about man and his activities during this age?

The answer is manifold. In the rocks can sometimes be found fossilized bones of animals of long ago. In many places such as caves and the gravel deposits along former

river-beds we can find human remains in the shape of skulls, bones, weapons, and tools. This is especially true of the burial-mounds, or 'barrows,' of our ancestors, where, too, are often found pieces of pottery and sometimes personal belongings of the buried ones. Remains of earthworks and the piles of lake-dwellings give us an idea of early settlements and methods of defence. Erections of stones afford clues to prehistoric religion and the methods of building. Such pieces of evidence cannot enable us to build up the entire past, nor to give definite dates to particular events. But we can build up from them an intelligible picture, and, if we cannot give dates, we can place most events in a correct *order* of happening by observing the rock or gravel or kind of barrow in which the objects are found.

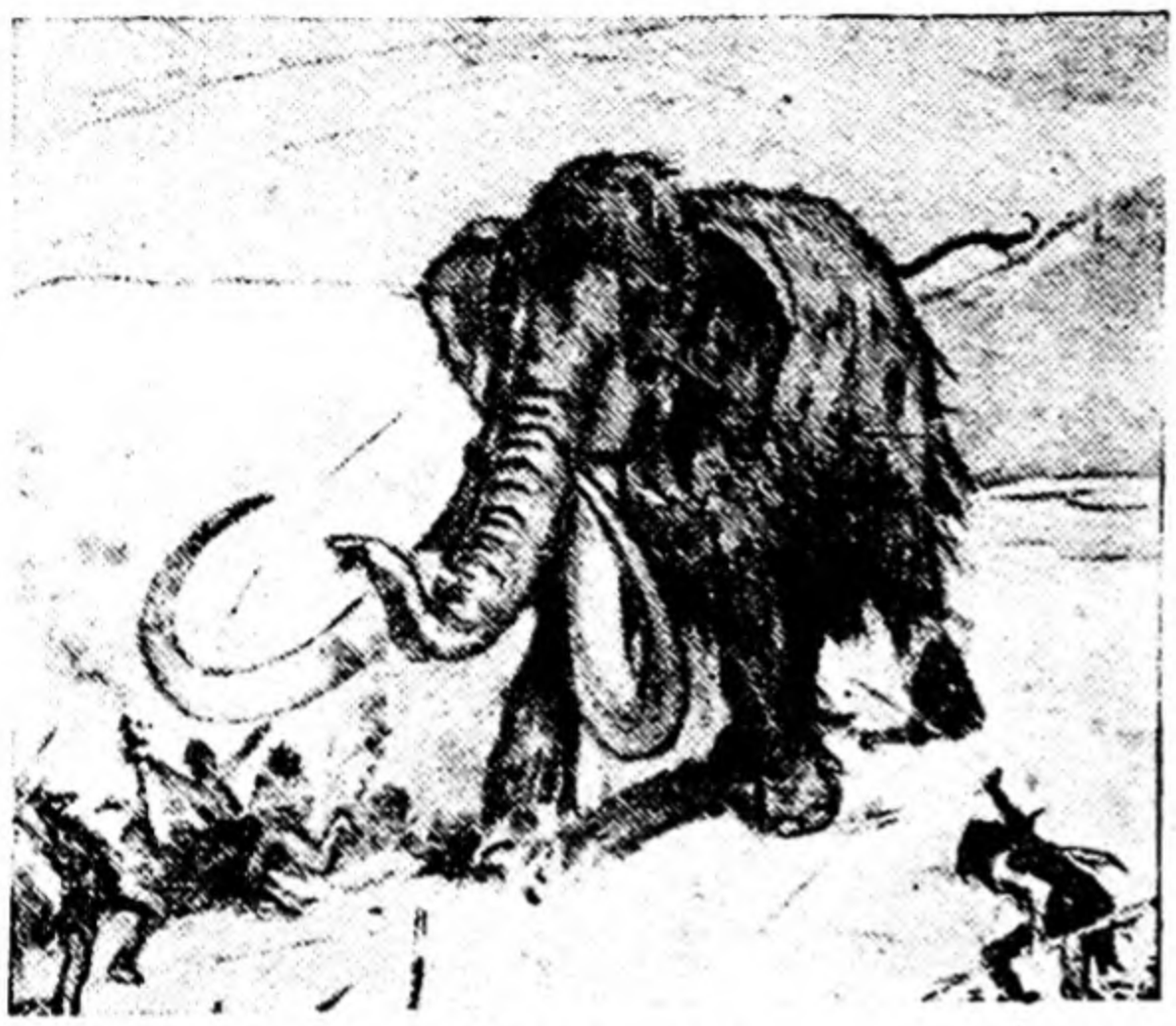
Thus the different levels of gravel terraces along the Thames tell us of the Old Stone Age. In Grimes Graves, Norfolk, we can picture the men of the New Stone Age mining their flints; when these pits were opened up in our own times, heaps of flint blocks were found ready for hauling to the surface, while around lay the little chalk lamps and the horn-picks to help the miners in their work. At Maiden Castle, in Dorsetshire, we can see how men of the same age protected themselves by elaborate earthworks. Stonehenge speaks to us from the early Bronze Age; while the remains of the Glastonbury Lake Village show us a settlement (not a common type at this period, it is true) of the early Iron Age.

The Stone Age

It is impossible to say when man first appeared in our country or in other parts of the world. Probably it was towards the end of the four Ice Ages which once held parts of Europe in their grip. This would place man's origin about 50,000 B.C., or even very much earlier.

The earliest men are known as Old Stone Age or Palæolithic men (Greek *palaios* = old; *lithos* = stone). They made

their tools and weapons from pieces of stone or flint which they chipped roughly into the required shape. Their commonest implement was the 'hand-axe,' or 'fist-hatchet,' made by chipping one piece of stone against another until the 'axe' was sufficiently sharp for cutting at its wide end and narrow enough to be grasped at the other end. With such primitive weapons, and with the aid of such devices as traps and pit-falls, our early ancestors hunted the wild animals of their time—the mammoth, the bear, the wolf, the reindeer, and, in the warmer periods, the rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and sabre-toothed tiger. Britain was then a land of swamps and thick forests where danger lurked. Men of the Old Stone Age learned to make fires and to carve rough likenesses of the animals they hunted. Their clothes were made of skins and furs.



MAMMOTH
British Museum (Natural History)

The end of the Old Stone Age in Britain is wrapped in mystery. We know that it was at this period that the British Isles were separated from the mainland. Many thousands of years later, perhaps about 10,000 B.C., a new race of men appear—the New Stone Age, or Neolithic, men (Greek *neos* = new). In this country, unlike many Continental countries, there seems to have been a distinct gap between the two Stone Ages.

The New Stone Age lasted from 10,000 B.C. till just after 2000 B.C., and from then to our own times we can trace the history of the inhabitants of our country without any real break. Neolithic man was short and dark, and is sometimes called Iberian, as he lived in large numbers in the Mediter-

ranean area including Spain, or Iberia. He was much more advanced than Palæolithic man, and could grind and polish his stones into axes, knives, chiscls, arrow-heads, scrapers, and borers, which were far superior to the hand-axe of the Old Stone Age. Sometimes he attached wooden shafts or handles

In other ways he marks an advance. He had tamed the dog to help him in the chase, and had domesticated the ox, sheep, goat, and pig to provide him with a greater variety of food, and, in the case of the sheep, with wool which he may have known how to spin and weave into cloth. He led a more settled life and developed some of the simpler arts and crafts. He discovered how to make pottery. He built himself rough 'beehive' huts of branches and bracken. His villages were placed on the dry chalky heights of the downland country at a safe distance from the dangers of the forests, and were protected by earthworks. He must have pondered over questions of religion and the future life. At Avebury, in Wiltshire, he erected the greatest stone circle in the world; unfortunately only a fragment of it remains to-day. He buried his dead in barrows (usually of the 'long' type), and very often placed therein weapons and pottery for use in the future life.

FLINT IMPLEMENT
Found in Gray's Inn Lane, London, in 1690.

The Bronze Age

About 2000 B.C. a new race of men, who buried their dead in 'round' barrows, invaded Britain. Soon after their appearance the use of bronze (copper hardened with tin) was introduced. The Bronze Age in this country lasted roughly from 1800 B.C. to 400 B.C.

Weapons, tools, and utensils came now to be made of

bronze. But the use of the new metal spread slowly, and throughout the Bronze Age it seems that some objects, *e.g.*, arrow-heads, continued to be made of stone. Other metals (gold and lead) were also used for ornamental and other purposes. Britain stood on the threshold of the Age of Metal, an age which was to alter the history of the world and of our own country in particular.

Other advances occurred during the Bronze Age. Agriculture was practised; pottery was improved; cloth was woven. Trade with the Continent developed, amber being imported for ornamental uses and tin being exported for the manufacture of bronze articles.

LATE CELTIC BRONZE SHIELD WITH ENAMELLED STUDS
Found in the Thames.

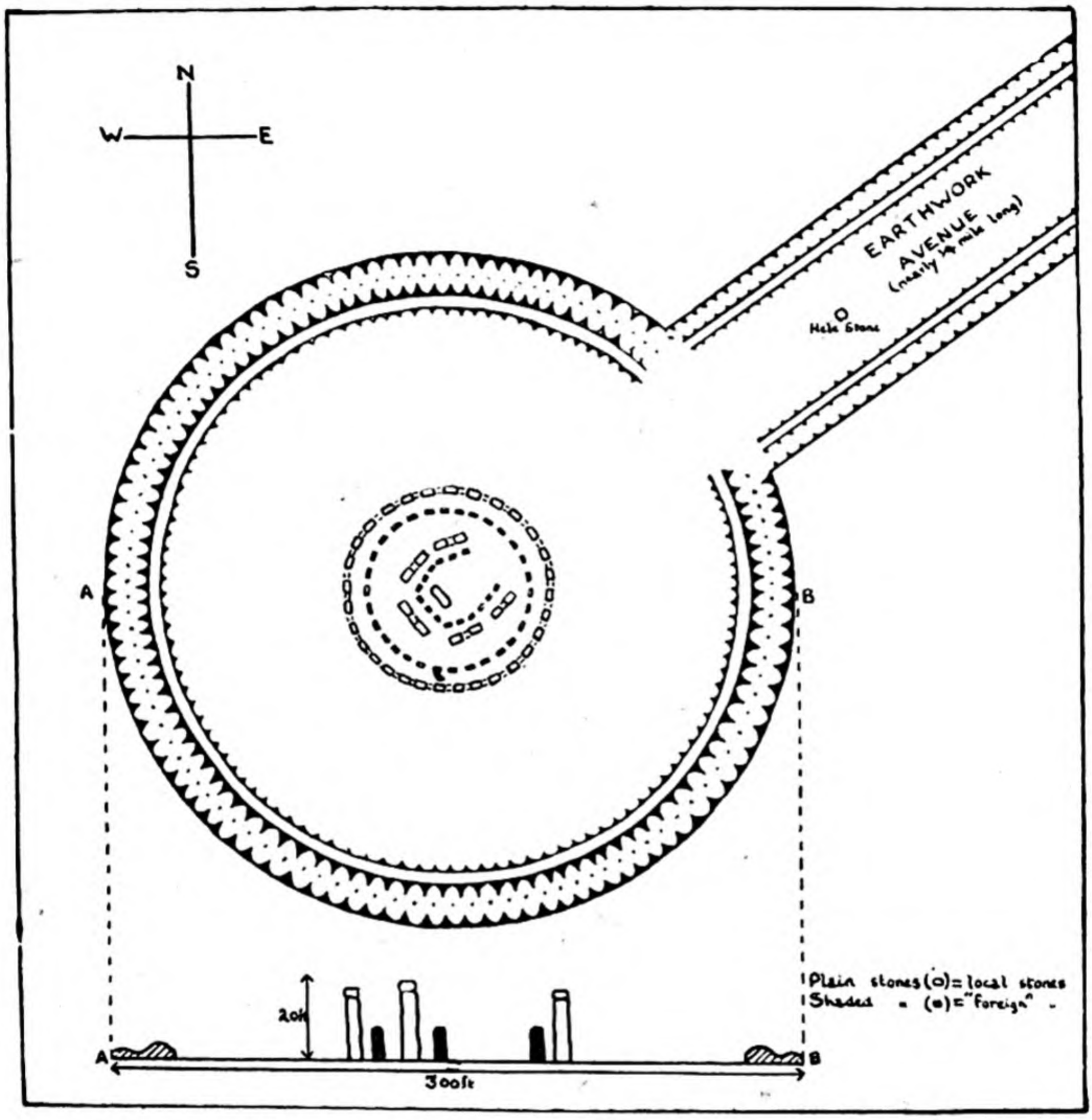
Stonehenge

Primitive man was not without ideas concerning the universe and the problems of life and death. He believed in a future life and in many gods (the sun, moon, fire, water, trees, hills, and so on). Impelled by his religion, he erected large stone monuments sometimes in the form of a circle. Many of these can be seen on the Continent, especially in Brittany. In our own country the best known is Stonehenge, in Wiltshire.

At Stonehenge to-day can be seen many of the original stones together with their earthworks. Originally there were four sets of stones: an outer circle, an inner circle, and, inside the latter, an outer horseshoe and an inner horseshoe.

The outer circle consisted of thirty huge stones standing upright. Along the top other stones, lying flat, were roughly jointed, so as to make a complete ring. The inner circle was made up of about thirty smaller stones, just standing upright on their own. Inside the inner circle was a kind of horseshoe arrangement of stones. This was made up of five huge

trilithons containing stones weighing about thirty tons each. Each trilithon consisted of two uprights and one stone lying flat across the top, rather like an empty doorway. The word



STONEHENGE

Plan and section of earthworks in their original position. On midsummer's day the sun rises directly behind the Hele Stone, looking in a straight line from the centre of the stone circle along the avenue.

'trilithon' just means 'three stones.' Then inside this first horseshoe was another horseshoe of fifteen smaller stones standing upright on their ends. You will see that this inner horseshoe corresponded with the inner circle. In the neighbourhood of the stones are grass-covered earthworks.

There is little doubt that Stonehenge was erected at the

5637.

beginning of the Bronze Age, probably at some time between 1800 B.C. and 1600 B.C.

The men who erected Stonehenge had plenty of time and labour and knew the use of the lever. They could pull the huge stones many miles by using tree-trunks to serve as rollers and strands of twisted hide to serve as ropes. They could lever the stones up, inch by inch, packing wood and smaller stones underneath as they raised them. Then, when the stones were in position, they could clear away the packing, as the builders of the Pyramids had done one thousand years before. The really puzzling fact about its erection is that the smaller stones of the inner circle and inner horseshoe are 'foreign' stones not found in the neighbourhood. The nearest supply seems to be in Pembrokeshire, about 150 miles away, so that wherever these 'foreign' stones were obtained, it must have been a task demanding much courage, industry, and patience to bring them to Stonehenge.

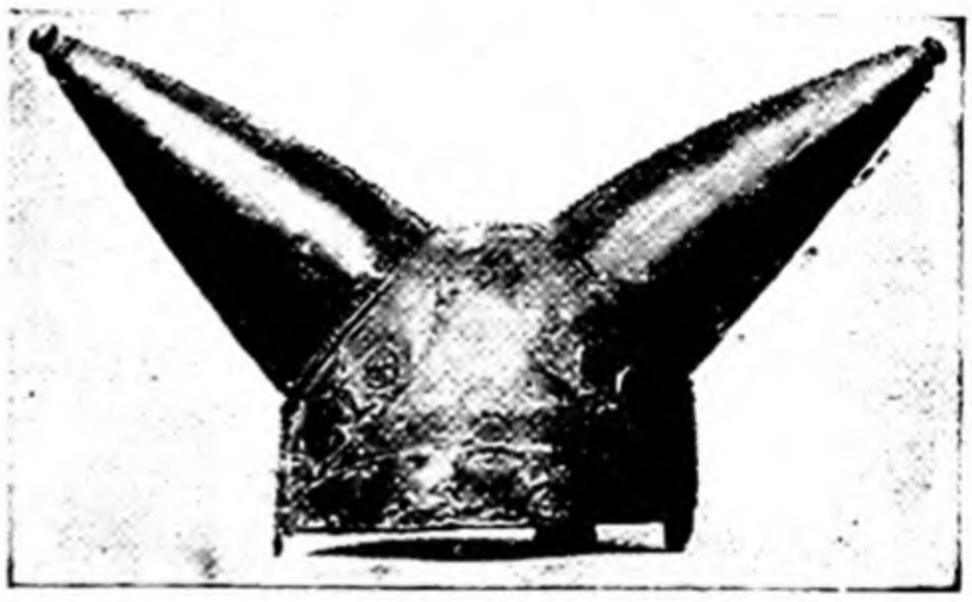
The exact purpose that Stonehenge served is not clear. Some people say it was a temple for worshipping the sun, others that it was a temple to the dead, remarking that round it are many barrows where the dead lie buried. Possibly it was erected for both reasons; but in any case, it is quite safe to regard it as a temple connected in some way with primitive religion, whatever its exact use might have been.

The Celts and the Iron Age

Some time about 600 B.C. or 700 B.C., while Britain was still in the Bronze Age, a tall, fair-haired race known as Celts began to invade our islands.

Broadly speaking, there were two waves of Celtic invasion. The Gaels came first, six or seven centuries before Christ. They were followed two or three centuries later by the Brythons. The earlier inhabitants—Iberians and others—were not exterminated, and they still form part of our national 'make-up,' especially in the north and west. The

Gaels were able to impose their language upon the peoples they conquered, and then were themselves driven by the Brythons to the extreme north and west. Thus the Gaelic tongue is found at the present day in Ireland, the Scottish Highlands, and the Isle of Man. The Brythons took possession of modern England and Wales, and gave us the name 'Britain'; they were the ancient Britons whom Julius Caesar came to punish for helping their fellow Celts in Gaul; they themselves were much later driven westward by the Anglo-Saxons, and their language survives in Wales, and till 150 years ago it was spoken in Cornwall.



BRITISH HORNED HELMET

The Gaels had belonged to the Bronze Age, but the Brythons, about 400 B.C., introduced the use of iron. The Iron Age had begun, but the change from one 'age' to another was in this, as in other cases, very gradual. Trade increased, especially in Cornish tin and Sussex iron. Some of the ancient tracks of the country, such as the Pilgrims' Way in the south are old trading-routes dating from this time. The beginnings of London as a trading-centre can also be traced back to pre-Roman times. Nor were the Celts lacking in artistic ability, as the curved and flowing designs upon many of their objects show.

The Celts were split up into many warlike tribes, but their religion played an important part in helping to keep them together. Their priests, known as Druids, were far more than religious officials presiding at religious gatherings and climbing the sacred oak-tree to cut down the mistletoe. They passed down by word of mouth, from one generation to another, the traditions of their race. They tried disputes between individuals and between tribes, and punished offenders. Theirs was a power before which many a petty

chieftain must have trembled. In return for their services they were exempt from taxes and military burdens. Small wonder that we find them later encouraging resistance against the Roman invader, who threatened not only the independence of their race but the power and privileges of the Druids as well!

The Ancient Civilizations

To many peoples of the ancient world Britain must have seemed much like Australia or the heart of Africa to Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was a far-away, unexplored country, backward in the arts of peace and war, and known only to a few daring travellers and traders.

The Mediterranean Sea had been the centre of the ancient world. Along the shores of the Nile the Egyptians had irrigated their fields, built their pyramids, invented the art of writing, and developed their crafts and learning several thousand years before Christ. The people of Mesopotamia, in the river-valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, had not been far behind. There the wonderful city of Babylon with its Hanging Gardens had been built; there the first code of laws had been drawn up and the planets had been discovered. The sailors of Crete (midway between Egypt and Greece) had spread and developed many of these discoveries. The Phœnicians had worked out the alphabet, and by their trade they had carried civilization throughout the Mediterranean and even beyond. The Hebrews, in their wanderings and during the years of their captivity, had formed an idea of God as the loving Father of all mankind, and had thus prepared the way for the later teachings of Christ. In the fifth century before Christ, ancient civilization had in some ways reached its height among the city-states of Greece. Athens had led the way, though other cities had followed close behind. Under the Greeks, sculpture, architecture, poetry, drama, and philosophy had reached great heights,

while in some of their cities the people, for the first time in history, had taken part in matters of government.

By the second century before Christ the Mediterranean world had fallen before the mighty power of Rome. Beginning as an outpost of the Latin tribes against their Etruscan enemies, Rome, from its position on the Tiber, had slowly, but surely, spread its tentacles over Italy and thence over the rest of the civilized world. The Romans were more practical than the Greeks. They gave the ancient world strong government, sound laws, and a highly developed town life. They constructed roads to bind their dominions together.

These ancient civilizations had not been without their dark side. Wars, oppression, wanton cruelty, slavery—these must be borne in mind in any estimate of the ancient world. But these existed among uncivilized as well as civilized peoples, and are best regarded as the relics of barbarism rather than the inventions of civilization.

Early Mediterranean Contacts with Britain

Before the Roman conquest one of the chief links between Britain and the Mediterranean countries was provided by the tin-trade. The Phœnicians called Britain the 'tin-islands,' and Phœnician merchants came to Cornwall many centuries before Christ to exchange their cloth and ornaments for the metal that was needed in the manufacture of bronze articles.

Much British tin found its way to the Mediterranean by another route. It was sent by sea to the mouth of the River Loire, in Gaul, and thence carried overland to the Greek colony of Massilia (Marseilles). It was possibly to discover a cheaper sea-route that the Greek merchants encouraged the voyage of Pytheas, the first explorer to reach Britain and write about his discoveries.

Pytheas reached this country (called by him the 'Pretanic Isle') about 325 B.C. by sailing through the Pillars of Hercules (now the Straits of Gibraltar). His own writings

have been lost, but we possess extracts from them in the writings of later Greeks. We learn that he found the people of Cornwall engaged in tin-mining, and that as he sailed along the south coast and reached Kent he found abundant supplies of corn growing. Pytheas then turned north and sailed along the east coast to Scotland, where he was told of the island of Thule (possibly the Shetlands or even Norway), where the nights in summer were extremely short. His account is full of interesting observations: the damp climate of Britain, the high tides of the North Sea compared with those of the Mediterranean, and the rumoured existence of the midnight sun farther north.

Trade between Britain and the Continent is also shown by the existence of coins made nearly 200 years before Christ. Some of these coins (gold 'staters' of Philip of Macedon, and British imitations of them) have been found in the southern counties. In the north, where trade was less developed, iron bars were in common use as coins.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Mention some of the important ways in which the fact that Great Britain is an island has influenced her history.

2. Try to find out at least one place, either near your home or where you go for your holidays, where prehistoric remains have been discovered.

3. Make a list in their correct order of the chief inhabitants of this country from Neolithic man to the Roman invasion. State briefly what each race was famous for.

4. Write an essay on Stonehenge under the headings: (*a*) when, (*b*) how, (*c*) why, it was built.

5. Why do you think the British Isles were behind the rest of Europe in their development?

6. Write notes on: Pytheas, Brythons, Druids.

CHAPTER II

BRITAIN AND ROME

Julius Caesar's Visits to Britain

DURING the first century before Christ the government of the Roman Republic fell into the hands of successful generals. The most important of these was Julius Caesar, who, in order to increase his power, obtained permission to conquer Gaul. While engaged in this task, he paid two short visits to Britain (55 B.C. and 54 B.C.). The Britons had been helping the Gauls, who were of the same race (Celts) as themselves, and Julius Caesar crossed the Channel to punish them. Caesar wrote an account of his conquest of Gaul called the *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, and in this he mentions his visits to Britain, and the sort of people he found there. His description of the ancient Britons, although not very long, is valuable as it is the earliest written account of which we can be certain.

JULIUS CAESAR

The story of how the Romans landed in 55 B.C. is vividly told in Caesar's own words:

> Then, as our soldiers hung back, chiefly on account of the deep water, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion prayed to the gods that what he was about to do might turn out well, and shouted: "Comrades, jump down, unless you wish to see the eagle fall into the hands of the enemy. I, for my part, will do my duty to the Republic and my general." Shouting in a loud voice, he sprang out of the ship and began to bear the eagle towards the enemy

Caesar's first visit was undertaken late in the summer, and lasted only three weeks. It was more of a reconnaissance than an invasion, and when he heard that a storm had destroyed part of his fleet, he hurried back to Gaul.

In the following year he returned to Britain with a larger army and with more time at his disposal. He defeated the British near the modern St Albans. The British chieftains submitted, and Caesar, who had no intention then of permanently conquering Britain, returned to Gaul. Ten years later (44 B.C.) he was assassinated at Rome by a band of conspirators who thought that he was becoming too powerful and was overthrowing the old republican institutions of Rome.

From Julius Caesar to the Roman Conquest

After Caesar's withdrawal the Romans left Britain in peace for nearly one hundred years. The Britons, however, continued to learn of Roman ideas and customs from traders, many of whom came from Gaul, which by this time had been largely Romanized.

The British King, Cymbeline (A.D. 5–40), the hero of one of Shakespeare's plays, gave encouragement to Roman ideas. He made himself supreme over many British chieftains and issued coins bearing the Latin inscription "Rex Brittonum," *i.e.*, King of the Britons.

Meanwhile two important events had taken place abroad.

In 31 B.C. the Roman Empire was established by Augustus, the great-nephew and adopted son of Julins Caesar. The old republican officers were superseded. Henceforth, till the fall of Rome, over five hundred years later, the Roman Emperor (or sometimes, in later years, two joint-emperors) exercised sole sway over the peoples of Rome's widespread dominions, from the Gauls in the north to the Africans in the south, and from the Spaniards in the west to the Syrians and Mesopotamians in the east.

The second of these events was the birth of Jesus Christ

in the reign of Augustus, the first Emperor. Christ's teaching and death took place in the reign of Augustus's successor, but as yet His teaching of the Fatherhood of God and the power of love were confined to a small number of disciples in Judæa. It was still the grain of mustard-seed of His parable; but in succeeding centuries it was to establish an empire in the minds of men more widespread and more permanent than the newly founded Empire of Rome.

The Roman Conquest of Britain

In A.D. 43 the fourth Emperor, Claudius, decided upon the conquest of Britain. He sent an experienced general, Aulus Plautius, at the head of four legions and many auxiliary troops. A Roman legion consisted of about 5000 highly trained men, and formed a complete military unit.

The Romans met with opposition from many of the British tribes, especially in the Midlands, Wales, and the North. One British chief, Caractacus, was driven from his home in the Midlands to South Wales, where he was eventually captured. He was sent as a prisoner to Rome, but the Emperor Claudius pardoned him on account of his manly bearing.

In North Wales resistance was organized by the Druids from their headquarters in Mona (Anglesey); but a new Roman general, Suetonius Paulinus, defeated the Britons, slaughtered the Druids, and destroyed their sacred groves.

Meanwhile, in the absence of the legions, revolt had broken out in the east of Britain under Boadicea (more strictly, *Boudicca*), Queen of the Iceni. The Romans had flogged the British Queen and robbed and ill-treated her people. In revenge, Boadicea and the Iceni sacked and burnt Camulodunum (Colchester), Verulamium (near St Albans), and Londinium (London), slaughtering thousands of Romans and their supporters. Paulinus hurried back from Mona and put down the revolt. To save herself from the shame of capture, Boadicea took poison (A.D. 61).

After Boadicea's revolt the Roman conquest was assured in the south. In the north it was only a question of time. When Julius Agricola was made Governor of Britain in A.D. 78, we pass from the period of conquest to the period of settlement, although in Wales and the extreme north there was still much fighting to be done.

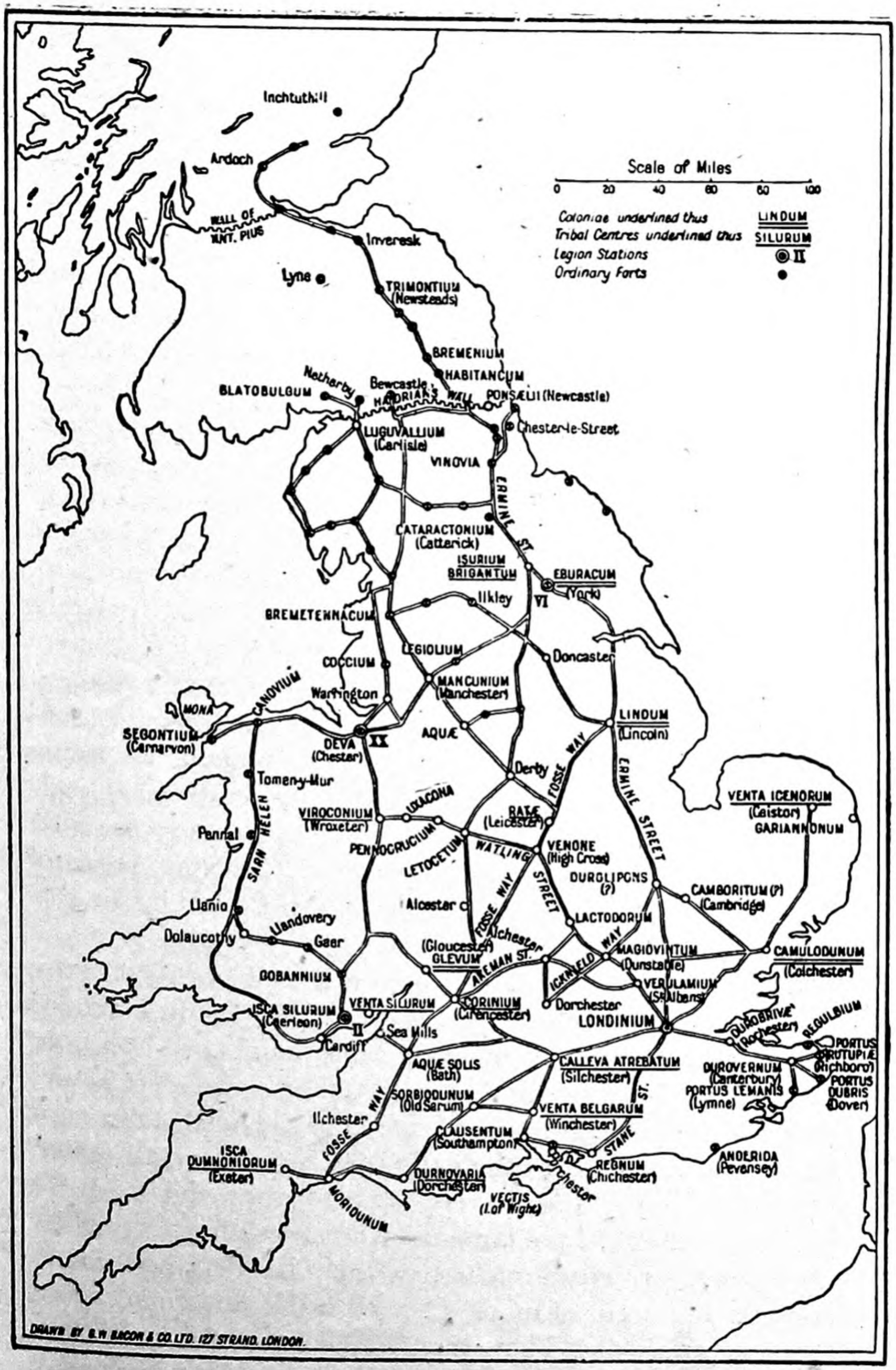
Julius Agricola

The most outstanding of the early Roman rulers of Britain was Julius Agricola, Governor from A.D. 78 to A.D. 85. His work illustrates the double task that the Romans had set themselves—namely, to subdue Britain and to civilize it.

Agricola first invaded North Wales, where the Druids had once more inflamed the Britons to revolt. His soldiers swam the Menai Straits to Mona, where their superior arms and discipline gave them the victory. Agricola then marched north, his soldiers building roads as they went. Scotland was reached, and a line of forts was built from the Clyde to the Forth. In the following year the north revolted, and Agricola was obliged once more to invade Scotland, where the rebels were defeated somewhere in the Grampian Hills.

Agricola's victories in war were matched by his victories in peace. He taught the Britons to drain marshes, to clear forests, to grow corn more abundantly, and to work their mines more profitably. His son-in-law, Tacitus, who was a great Roman historian, says of him:

> Agricola gave private encouragement and public aid to the building of temples, courts of justice, and dwelling-houses, praising the energetic and reproving the idle. He likewise provided a liberal education for the sons of the British chiefs . . . that they who lately disdained the tongue of Rome now coveted its eloquence. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the 'toga' became fashionable. Step by step they were led to things which disposed to vice—the lounge, the bath, and the sumptuous dinner-party.



ROMAN BRITAIN

Evidently Tacitus did not consider that Roman civilization would be entirely for the good of the Britons, foreseeing that parts of it might lead to a softening of their character.

The Government of Britain

As part of the great Roman Empire Britain had a settled government and a unity such as it had never known before, and such as it was not to know for many centuries after the Romans had departed.

The Governor in charge of 'Britannia' spent much of his time at Eboracum (York), within easy reach of the northern frontier. Here, too, was stationed the VIth Legion. Originally it had been the home of the IXth Legion, but this legion had been completely lost during a revolt of the northern tribes. Not a man returned to tell the tale, and its fate is one of the unsolved mysteries of history. Other legions were stationed at other important centres: the XXth Legion at Deva (Chester), and the IInd Legion at Isca (Caerleon-on-Usk). At these towns have been found remains informing us of this military occupation of Britain nearly 2000 years ago. A tombstone found at Chester, for instance, bears on it the inscription, "To the memory of Caecilius Avitus of Emerita Augusta, an Optio of the XXth Legion." An *optio* was an adjutant in the Roman army.

Many of the Roman towns were originally fortified camps (*castra*) or military colonies (*coloniae*), the Latin words for which are still found in such place-names as Don*caster*, Man*chester*, Lei*cester*, and Lin*coln*. The town of Chester, commanding the gateway to Wales and the north-west, must have been regarded as the camp or *castra* before all others.

These military towns were connected by the roads for which the Romans are famous. Roman roads are noted for their long, straight stretches, as their builders had not to consider the needs of much wheeled traffic and could afford to ignore gradients. They were also, like most things Roman, solidly made; and in many parts of the country remains of

them can still be seen. They were often raised above the level of the surrounding countryside and strengthened with heavy stones and a kind of concrete. In Britain some of the chief roads were Ermine Street (now largely followed by

HADRIAN'S WALL

the Great North Road), Fosse Way from Exeter to Lincoln, and Watling Street. The last-named runs from Dover through London to Chester, and is nowadays followed closely by the railway from London to Chester. This is not the only link that the modern railway is said to have with its Roman forerunner. It is sometimes stated (with no real authority, however) that George Stephenson obtained the standard gauge of his lines (4 ft. 8½ in.) from the wheel-base shown on many Roman roads.

In the extreme north, walls were built to keep out the savage Picts, as the Romans called the inhabitants of Scotland, perhaps because they painted their skins like *pict*ures. Julius Agricola's line of forts from the Clyde to the Forth was connected by a twin wall made by the Emperor Antonine about A.D. 150; but this frontier was found to be too far north and had to be abandoned in favour of 'Hadrian's Wall,' which had been constructed about

A.D. 122. Hadrian's Wall extended from Solway Firth to Wallsend on the Tyne, a distance of 70 miles. It was 8 feet thick and nearly 20 feet high, with small watch-towers every quarter of a mile, and large forts every mile. In front of the wall was a ditch, while behind it was a military road. Parts of Hadrian's Wall can still be seen creeping like some huge monster across the rugged moorland.

Roman Civilization in Britain

Roman rule in Britain lasted nearly 400 years, but it was only the lowlands of the middle, southern, and eastern parts of the country that felt the benefits of the *Pax Romana*, or Roman peace. Among the wild moors and mountains of the north and of Wales the Roman occupation was essentially military. When, therefore, we speak of Roman civilization being introduced into Britain, we must remember that we refer chiefly to that part of the country roughly south-east of a line joining the Humber to the Bristol Channel.

The example that had been set by Julius Agricola was followed by later Romans. In many places swamps were drained and forests were cleared, though it is easy to exaggerate the extent to which this was done. Agriculture was improved, and in good years Britain had a surplus of wheat to export, earning for her the title of 'The Granary of the North.' The lead-mines of the Mendip Hills and elsewhere, and the iron-mines of Sussex and the Forest of Dean, were more profitably worked than before. Scattered about the country, especially in the extreme south, were Roman villas or country-houses surrounded by their estates. The remains of about 500 of these have been excavated. Typical features of these villas were long corridors, courtyards, mosaic pavements, central heating of the rooms by means of hot air passed under the floors and through the walls, and rooms where the inhabitants could have the baths that the Romans loved so much. The estate or farm was worked mainly by slave-labour, while the owner was often a Romanized Briton.

Roman civilization, however, was based essentially upon city-life; and it is in the cities, as we might expect, that we find most evidences of the Romanization of Britain. The Romans spread their ideas and habits mainly by example.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE EXCAVATIONS AT VIROCONIUM (WROXETER)
Note the hypocaust in left foreground
Photo W. A. Mansell and Co.

They did not force them upon their subject-races. Hence in the country districts some of the old British ways of life must have continued throughout Roman times. But in the towns it was far different, as here were to be found Roman citizens, traders, soldiers, and officials whose influence upon their British neighbours was bound to be great.

Consequently many Britons became Romanized. They wore the Roman *toga*, spoke the Latin tongue, lived in comfortable houses, used the fashionable Samian pottery (imported at first from Gaul, but later made in Britain), frequented the market-square for gossip, and were to be seen at the public baths, amphitheatre, or whatever places of resort the town possessed.

Many Roman towns were built upon the same general plan, namely, with four main streets crossing at right angles. Some towns of Roman origin, like Chester, still retain the old Roman plan in their modern lay-out. In the centre of the town, where the main streets crossed, was the *forum*, or market-square. Close at hand would usually be the *basilica*, or town-hall, temples, baths, and shops. Some towns possessed an amphitheatre; while Verulamium (near St Albans) boasted a theatre. The town of Bath, then as now, was famous for its medicinal waters. In general the towns in the peaceful areas were not walled; but by the fourth century, as the enemies of Rome increased in power and numbers, it was found desirable to strengthen the defences even of these.

PART OF A ROMAN TESSELLATED PAVEMENT
Found in London.

In this way the Roman wall of London came to be built. The importance of London really dates from Roman times. Its geographical position for the purposes of trade or of rapid communication between the Continent and northern Britain was unequalled. It was the nearest place where overland travellers from Kent could cross the Thames, and it was the best landing-place for ships coming up the Thames. It was not by accident that the Romans made most of their great roads spread out like a fan from London. But although London became the commercial centre of Roman Britain,

it never became the capital or even one of the smaller centres of government.

The Spread of Christianity in Britain

The Romans usually allowed their subjects to practise any kind of religion they chose. Many of the Britons combined their own gods with the Greek or Roman gods that were brought over by their rulers; some even adopted the worship of an eastern sun-god named Mithras.

Christianity, however, was strongly opposed by the Roman Government. The Christians were regarded as traitors to the state, partly because they refused to regard the Roman Emperor as divine. Consequently they suffered severe persecutions at the hands of emperors like Nero, many of them being burnt, crucified, or thrown to the wild animals. Nevertheless, through the efforts of missionaries, of whom St Paul in the New Testament is the best known, the new faith was spread.

In time Christianity reached Britain. The first British martyr for the new religion was Albanus, who was put to death in A.D. 304 at Verulamium (later renamed St Albans in his honour). It is said that Albanus, a Roman soldier, was converted by a Christian priest who was being hunted by other Roman soldiers, and that he changed clothes with the priest and offered himself up to death instead. The priest, too, was later caught and executed.

Soon afterwards the persecutions ceased. A new Emperor, Constantine, was proclaimed at York. Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Empire (A.D. 312). In A.D. 325 he held a great Church Council at Nicæa, in Asia Minor, where the greater part of the Nicene Creed, still said in churches, was drawn up. Constantine is also famed as the founder of Constantinople, a new capital for the Empire in the east.

The new faith naturally grew as a result of Constantine's work. How far it spread throughout Britain is impossible

to say; but probably its supporters in this country were few. The remains of only one Christian church, at Silchester, have been found, together with a few Christian objects from other places. We know, however, that in the reign of Constantine there were at least three bishops in Britain. We can be certain, too, that the Christians of this country, if few in numbers, were firmly attached to their faith. After the departure of the Romans, the heathen Angles and Saxons failed to stamp out Christianity altogether. The Celtic Christians fled to the more remote parts of our island, where they kept alive the flame within their own hearts, and sent out missionaries to kindle it in the hearts of others.

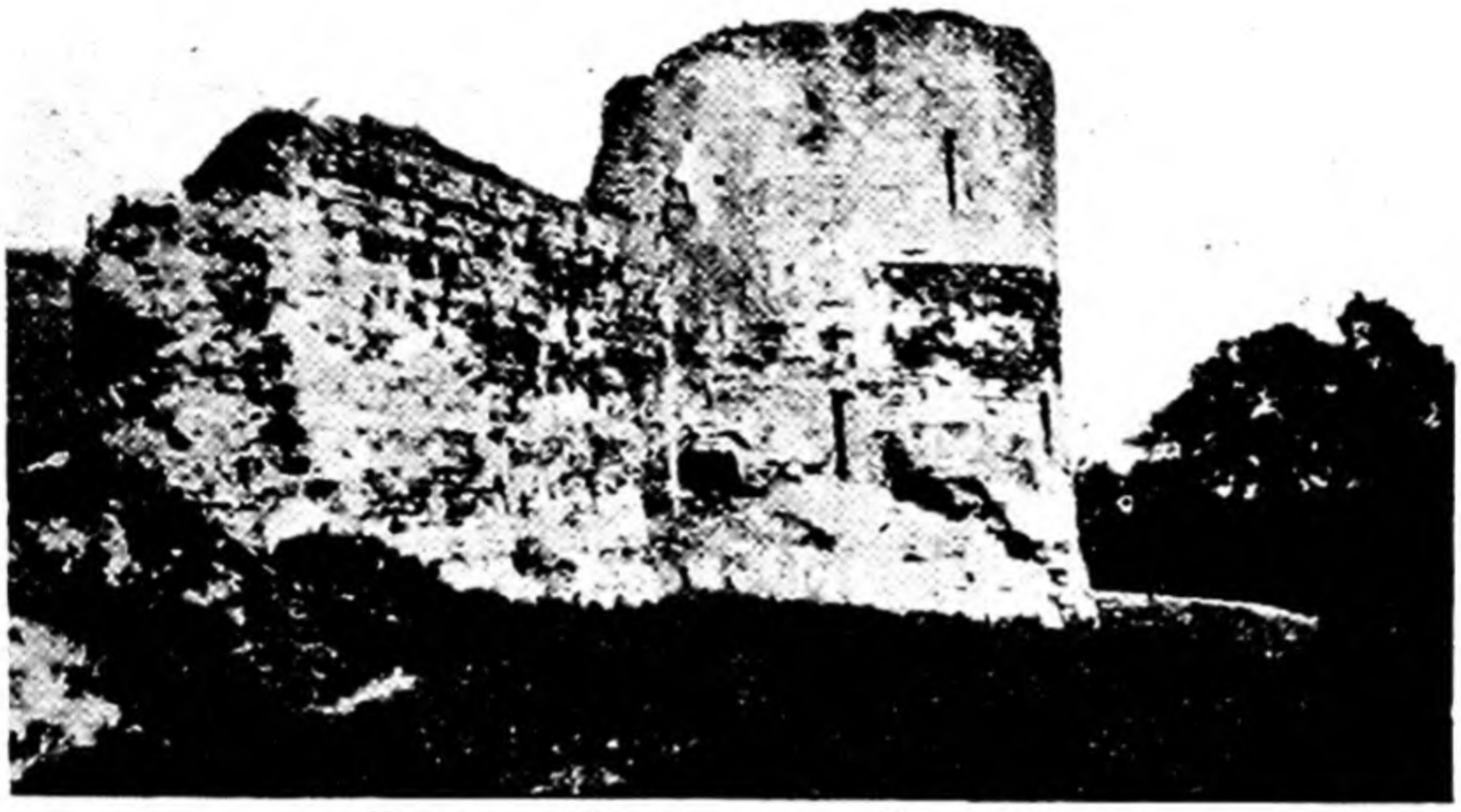
The Roman Legions leave Britain

We have already seen that the Roman occupation of Britain was of a twofold nature—peaceful and prosperous in the south-east, but military in the north-west. Probably the third century was the most peaceful period of Roman rule in Britain. After that, however, clouds begin to gather —the heralds of a storm that, when it broke a century later, swept away the rule of Rome not only in Britain but over the whole of western Europe.

In Britain enemies attacked from two directions. In the mountainous north were the untamed British tribes, and beyond them their Celtic cousins, the Scots from Ireland and the Picts from Scotland. But from the end of the third century the hitherto peaceful south-east was disturbed by the raids of Saxons from their home in Germany across the North Sea. The Romans appointed special officials to meet these dangers. Supreme military authority was granted to the Duke of the Britains (*Dux Britanniarum*). The coast-line from the Wash to the Isle of Wight was strengthened by the erection of ten forts, and its defence was entrusted to the Count of the Saxon Shore (*Comes Litoris Saxonici*), with his headquarters at Richborough.

The Empire was weakening, however. The frontiers were

being threatened by barbarian tribes—Goths, Vandals, Franks, and others that we shall read about in the next chapter. Britain was an outlying province—the farthest from the natural centre of Roman power, the Mediterranean



ROMAN BASTION AT PEVENSEY

Pevensey was within the district patrolled by the Count of the Saxon Shore.

Photo by Cecily Hughes

Sea. It would probably be the first to be left to its fate. In A.D. 410 Rome itself was taken and sacked by the Goths. In the same year or thereabouts—for in this period of confusion the dates are by no means certain—the last of the Roman legions left Britain. Roman rule in 'Britannia' was ended.

The Roman Legacy in Britain

The direct rule of Rome over Britain lasted 350 years; this is as long as from the reign of Queen Elizabeth to the present day. The indirect influence of Rome was much longer. The Anglo-Saxons were destructive; but they could not destroy altogether the work of four centuries.

The heathen invaders stamped out Christianity where they settled, and England had to be converted anew two centuries later. The Celtic Christians who fled to the remote parts of our islands founded monasteries and sent missionaries to

the heathen. The Anglo-Saxons destroyed or neglected the cities that Rome had built; yet often the city-sites that Rome had chosen proved permanent and gave birth to new centres of town-life in later centuries. The large number of city-names ending in *chester* and the like is sufficient to prove this. In many places can be found traces of the Roman military occupation. Hadrian's Wall and remains at Chester and York bear witness to the Roman eagles in the north; Pevensey and Burgh Castles bear similar witness in the south. But the most abiding work of Rome lay in her roads, which she constructed in the danger-zones and the peaceful districts alike. They were too solid and sensible for the Saxons to destroy, too well made to suffer greatly from neglect. They remained the best roads in the country for 1500 years after their construction, and even at the present day they serve as foundations for some of our hard-worked modern highways.

But all these—fugitive Christianity, excavated cities, castle-walls, and roads—are not much to show for one-fifth of our written history. The Roman legacy to Britain was really very little. Other provinces, like Gaul and Spain, inherited much more; but Britain lost her Roman civilization when she became England. Even the large number of English words of Latin origin do not date from the Roman occupation; they were introduced through the French language after the Norman conquest, or else were introduced directly from the Latin that was used by scholars in the Middle Ages.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Construct a time-chart showing the main events in the history of Roman Britain from 55 B.C. to A.D. 410.

2. Write an essay on Julius Agricola.

3. Draw a map of Roman Britain, and insert the headquarters of the three legions, the walls of Hadrian and Antonine, three Roman roads, the chief 'spa' in Roman times, the commercial

centre of the country, the headquarters of the Count of the Saxon shore, the coast patrolled by the Count.

4. What do you know of: (*a*) Caractacus, (*b*) Boadicea, (*c*) Albanus, (*d*) Constantine?

5. Explain the chief differences between north-west and south-east Britain in Roman times. Why did these differences exist?

6. What reasons led to the abandonment of Britain in the fifth century?

7. Explain fully why very few remains of Roman civilization exist in this country.

PART II
THE THRESHOLD OF THE MIDDLE AGES

CHAPTER III
THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS THROUGHOUT WESTERN EUROPE

The Roman Empire in the Fifth Century

LONG before the fall of Rome in A.D. 476 the Roman Empire had shown signs of decay. In face of the many dangers that threatened it from without and the weakness that was showing itself within, the Empire had proved too large for efficient government from one capital. Throughout the fourth century the Empire was sometimes split into two parts, a western and an eastern part. This was the more natural because the western part had come under the influence of Rome itself and was Latin-speaking, while the east still felt the influence of the Greeks and of Alexander the Great and was mainly Greek-speaking. In A.D. 395 occurred the death of Theodosius I, the last Emperor to rule the Roman Empire in its full extent. Thereafter the 'Roman' Empire was ruled by two emperors from their capitals of Constantinople, in the east, and Ravenna, in the west. This division of the Empire strengthened the government and the defences in many ways, as it enabled more attention to be given to each half; but at times it led to weakness, as sometimes one emperor got rid of his enemies by sending them to attack the other emperor.

The real weakness of the Empire was deeper-rooted than this, however. The government was corrupt; emperors

were weak puppets or cruel tyrants; treachery and murder were commonly practised; taxation was high and the tax-gatherers extortionate; idle mobs disturbed the peace of cities, while in the countryside agriculture decayed; in the west especially the number of the population was falling. The Roman Empire, full of energy in its youth and of wisdom in its manhood, was now, in its old age, crippled and decaying. It was in no fit state to meet the attacks of the young and vigorous barbarians who were clamouring at its gates.

GRAVESTONE OF A ROMAN LEGIONARY
Found in the Rhineland.

The Barbarian Tribes

The Roman Empire was nearly surrounded by enemies, from the Picts and Scots in the north-west to the Arabs and more civilized Persians in the south-east. The greatest danger, however, came from central Europe—from the thick forest-lands east of the Rhine and north of the Danube which merged into the grassy plains of Russia and central Asia. The majority of the tribes of central Europe were German or Teutonic in race. They were not the same as the modern Germans, although the latter, like ourselves, are descended from some of them. In north Germany and Denmark dwelt the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons; east of the Rhine were the Franks; in central and southern Germany were the Lombards and Burgundians; east of them, in the vast lands north of the Danube, were Vandals and Goths, the latter being divided into Western Goths (or Visigoths) and

Eastern Goths (or Ostrogoths). All these were German in race; but behind them dwelt others, Slavs and Huns. The Slavs were often made the slaves of others, a fact which gave them their name. The Huns, a Mongolian race from the depths of Asia, were the terror of all others, Slavs, Germans, and Romans. Small, squat, flat-nosed, and ugly in appearance, they were superb horsemen and terrible foes, burning, ravaging, and plundering wherever they went. It was their boast that even the grass failed to grow again where once they had trodden. It was pressure from them, together with the desire for food, that drove the German tribes into the Roman Empire.

The German tribes, although mainly barbarian, were much less savage than the Huns. Some of them, like the Goths and Vandals, had for long felt the civilizing influence of Rome. Many had settled within the Empire itself, either as civilians or as Roman soldiers; some had risen to high positions in the army or the government; a few had even become the counsellors, or rather dictators, of the weak emperors. A Gothic bishop, Ulfilas, had carried the Gospel to his race, and many Germans had become Christians long before they settled inside the Empire. Unfortunately, their Christianity was somewhat different from the Roman form. They were Arian Christians, believing in the teaching of a fourth-century Egyptian priest, Arius, who recognized Christ's divinity, but denied that He was *fully* God.

Not all the barbarians had felt the influence of Rome or of Christianity. In the north of Germany the Franks, Jutes, Angles, and Saxons were still untamed heathens. But they, strange to say, were to alter the course of history in Europe, and even beyond, much more than the Goths or Vandals, who seemed in the fifth century to have outstripped their more savage and heathen kinsmen.

The Barbarians break through

Towards the end of the fourth century the Visigoths

were allowed to settle inside the frontier south of the River Danube. In A.D. 378 they revolted and defeated the Romans at Adrianople. They then moved westward and under their King, Alaric, entered Italy. In A.D. 410 Rome was taken and sacked—the first time the Eternal City had suffered such a disgrace for 800 years. Then, as if to prove their prowess before the whole Roman world, they proceeded to Gaul and Spain, and established a kingdom of their own in Spain and southern Gaul.

Spain had felt the hand of another barbarian tribe, the Vandals, who had marched through it on their way to Africa. The name of one of the present-day Spanish provinces, Andalusia (originally Vandalusia), is a reminder of this short-lived Vandal rule. In north Africa the Vandal chief, Gaiseric, one of the greatest of all the barbarian leaders, established a powerful kingdom, while his strong navy made him master of the western Mediterranean. In A.D. 455 the Vandal fleet sailed up the Tiber, and Rome was once more sacked.

Meanwhile the various Hunnish tribes had been united under the savage leadership of Attila, who had murdered his own brother to obtain his position. Attila struck terror into all hearts, German and Roman alike, and was named 'The Scourge of God.' He built up a huge empire stretching from Asia across central Europe. He advanced into Gaul, and a long and terrible battle took place at Châlons in A.D. 451. Most of the Germans (mainly Visigoths and Franks) supported the Romans, and in the end Attila was defeated. He died two years later, and the power of the Huns broke up. The German tribes realized that their future lay with the crumbling Roman Empire and not with the savage destructiveness of the Huns. The Germans brought with them, it is true, centuries of confusion and decay that are aptly called the 'Dark Ages'; but the darkness they brought was relieved by their own savage nobility and by the teachings of the Church. Far darker would have been the

succeeding centuries if Europe had fallen before the might of the Huns.

The Anglo-Saxons invade Britain

When the tramp of the Roman legions died away in Britain, the natives had to rely upon their own efforts. They strove valiantly, even defeating the heathen Picts and Scots in Flintshire, in A.D. 429, at a great battle called the 'Hallelujah Victory' from the shouts of Christian joy which they raised as they rushed into battle.

But the ravages of Picts and Scots continued, and in A.D. 449 the British King of Kent, Vortigern, invited the Germans from across the North Sea to come and expel his foes, promising them part of his kingdom in return. It was like calling in one burglar to expel another! The Jutes came under Hengist and Horsa, saw the fair kingdom of Kent, and conquered it—from both Picts and Scots *and* Vortigern! An old chronicle states that Vortigern fell in love with the beautiful daughter of Hengist, and offered him anything he liked in exchange for his daughter in marriage. Hengist replied by demanding the whole kingdom of Kent, and Vortigern agreed. Whether this story is true or not, the Jutes had to fight hard against the other British warriors before they obtained their new kingdom.

The Jutes were followed by others—Angles and Saxons, who came in greater numbers and followed the lines of the rivers wherever possible, expelling or enslaving the inhabitants. The work of conquest was piecemeal and slow—much slower than the Roman conquest had been. It continued for at least 150 years before the Anglo-Saxons obtained full control of England. Nor were the invaders always victorious. About A.D. 520 the British won a victory at Mount Badon, near Bath. Their leader, called by some Arthur, is undoubtedly the person round whom the legends of the Knights of the Round Table later grew up.

Two important victories mark the end of the Anglo-Saxon

conquest. Most of the Britons had been gradually driven to the mountain fastnesses of the north and west, though doubtless some had remained behind as slaves, or, in the case of the women, had married the Saxon warriors. In A.D. 577 the British were defeated at Deorham, near Bath.

SAXON SHIPS
Drawn from Saxon Illuminations.

The Saxons obtained control of the mouth of the Severn, and the British in Devon and Cornwall were cut off from their kinsmen in Wales. In A.D. 613 a similar victory at Chester gave the Saxons control of the Dee and separated the Welsh from their fellows in Lancashire and Cumberland. The British were now in three separate and remote parts of the country. Only in one of them, Wales, has the ancient British tongue lasted to our own time. From Cornwall and Devon, however, many British refugees fled to north-west France, which was renamed Brittany, and there the Celtic Breton tongue survives.

Place-names dating from this period are common. The word 'England' itself is only a shortened form of 'Angle-land.' The French name for our country, *Angleterre*, literally means 'Angle-land.' The Angles settled mainly in the east and north-east. Hence we have the district of East Anglia,

comprising Norfolk and Suffolk, the lands of the north folk and south folk of the Angles. The Saxons settled in the south and south-east; east Saxons in Essex, middle Saxons in Middlesex, south Saxons in Sussex, and west Saxons in Wessex (the district near Southampton). Their smaller settlements (no more than villages) were called 'hams' (homes) or 'tons' (towns); thus we have West Ham, Nottingham, Hampton, and Tonbridge. Their larger and more fortified settlements were 'burhs' (boroughs), whence we get Edinburgh (Edwin's borough) and Bury St Edmund's (the town or borough of St Edmund). Islands often ended in 'ea,' as in Chelsea and Battersea; the island of Mona became Anglesey, or 'Angles' island.'

The End of the Western Empire (A.D. 476)

While Anglo-Saxon and Briton had been engaged in their century-and-a-half death-struggle, the rest of Europe had also been the scene of bloodthirsty and fateful events.

Rome had been sacked by the Goths in A.D. 410 and by the Vandals in A.D. 455. The emperors in the west were becoming less and less powerful; their names are of no account. It was the barbarian chiefs who mattered. At length a barbarian, Odoacer, obtained control of Italy and decided to bring the line of western emperors to an end. The last Emperor was called Romulus Augustus (nicknamed 'Augustulus,' or 'little Augustus')—a strange combination of the names of the founder of Rome and of its first Emperor. In A.D. 476 Odoacer deposed him and ruled in his stead.

The end of the Western Empire in A.D. 476 marks the close of the ancient world. The Middle Ages—the thousand years between ancient and modern history—have now definitely begun. One idea, the idea of a universal empire, had been preserved by Odoacer. Romulus Augustus had been forced to yield his imperial authority to the eastern emperor, stating that henceforth only the one emperor in the east was needed. Odoacer then became ruler of Italy on behalf

of this eastern emperor. In actual fact Odoacer and other barbarians held sole sway in the west, as the eastern emperor was too far away to interfere. Still, it was important that the barbarians had not broken entirely with the past, but recognized, if only in theory, the position of the emperor at Constantinople.

EFFIGY OF KING CLOVIS
From his tomb.

The Franks invade Gaul

In the west Gaul alone remained under Roman rule; but soon after the fall of Rome it was invaded by the Franks, who gave their name to what we now call France.

The Frankish king, Clovis, was an admirer of much of Roman civilization, and caused Franks and Romanized Gauls to live peacefully together. He was the real founder of the French nation and monarchy. He was determined to extend his own power as widely as possible. Murder, treachery, bloodshed, and war were the means he used to attain his end. He fought against the Roman rulers, the Alemanni (whose name survives in the modern French name for Germany, *Allemagne*), the Visigoths, and the Burgundians.

Clovis and his Franks were heathens, but his wife was a devout Catholic. When hard-pressed during a battle against the Alemanni in A.D. 496, Clovis vowed that if his wife's God gave him victory he would become a Christian. The Franks won, and Clovis, with three thousand of his warriors, was baptized. "Bow down thine head," commanded the bishop as Clovis approached the font: "adore what thou hast burned, burn what thou hast adored." And so the Franks became Catholic Christians, the first of the barbarians to do so. Goths, Vandals, and others had for long been Arian Christians, but this had only cut them off from

their Roman subjects as much as if they had been heathens. With the Franks it was now different. They received the support of their Catholic subjects, while the Bishop of Rome (the Pope, or Father, of the Catholic religion) regarded them as his strongest support in a world beset with dangers.

The Revival of the Empire under Justinian

The eastern emperors were not satisfied with their position. The whole of the west was now in actual fact lost to them, although some of the barbarian rulers owed them allegiance in name.

In Italy Odoacer proved troublesome, and at length the Emperor sent against him another tribe of barbarians, the Ostrogoths, or East Goths, under Theodoric. This relieved the Eastern Empire from the dangerous Ostrogoths, and it promised to get rid of Odoacer. Theodoric treacherously murdered Odoacer at a banquet and established an Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy. Theodoric had spent his youth at Constantinople and had learnt to admire Roman civilization. In Italy he ruled wisely, restoring prosperity and preserving much that was being destroyed. Unfortunately the Ostrogoths were Arians, and were regarded by the Romans as strangers. Theodoric died in A.D. 526. His work of forming a united nation was only partly accomplished. In the following year Justinian, the last great Roman Emperor, ascended the throne at Constantinople.

Justinian (527–565) attempted to revive the greatness of the Empire. Roads were made, frontiers were strengthened, commerce was encouraged, bridges, palaces, and monasteries were built. His most famous building was the Church of Saint Sophia, at Constantinople, now used as a Mohammedan mosque.

His greatest work, which has made his name immortal, was in codifying Roman law, *i.e.*, getting rid of contradictions and repetitions, and arranging the laws under different headings. Several centuries earlier Rome had been a great

law-giver (the greatest the world has known), but her laws were scattered in many different places: the edicts of emperors, the decisions of the people's assemblies, the decrees of the Senate, and the writings of learned judges and lawyers. Justinian caused all these laws to be revised, and issued his

A Mosaic of Justinian

From the Church o San Vitale, Ravenna. Justinian is shown in the centre, with a bishop on his left. On the extreme left of the picture is the Christian monogram with the Greek letters X P (C H R), standing for Christ (Greek *Christos*).

Code, which contained the best of them correctly worded and carefully arranged. This work was of great benefit to the world. It preserved all the best of Roman laws, and was widely studied in the Middle Ages by statesmen and churchmen; in the modern world it has influenced the laws of many nations of Europe and even beyond.

Part of Justinian's ambition was to win back the west. In this he met with great success. The Vandals were expelled from Africa, the islands of Sardinia and Corsica were captured. The Ostrogothic Kingdom in Italy was overthrown, and the south-eastern part of Spain recovered from the

Visigoths. The Mediterranean was once more a Roman lake. It seemed as if the old Roman Empire was in the course of re-establishment. But Justinian's wars had produced high taxation, and the officials were still corrupt. The eastern, or Byzantine, Empire (Byzantium was the old name for

Constantinople) lasted in the east till the fall of Constantinople in 1453; but it could not long preserve the conquests of Justinian in the west. In A.D. 568, only three years after Justinian's death, most of Italy was once more overrun by a fresh barbarian tribe, the Lombards (in Latin *Langobardi*, or 'Longbeards'), who gave their name to the plain of Lombardy, in north Italy. The establishment of the Lombards in Italy, about the same time as the Battle of Deorham in England, really closes the first period of barbarian invasions. We must now see how a new Europe began to emerge from the ruins of the old.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain the chief differences between the German tribes and the Huns.

2. Take the following names of (*a*) tribes, (*b*) countries, and arrange them in order to show in what countries the different tribes settled:

(*a*) Franks, Visigoths, Vandals, Jutes, Ostrogoths, Saxons, Angles, Lombards.

(*b*) Italy, Spain, England, France, North Africa.

3. Make a list of:

(*a*) place-names on the Continent derived from the barbarians;

(*b*) four Roman towns and four Anglo-Saxon towns in England, with as different name-endings as you can find.

4. In what way did the Roman Empire continue after the fall of Rome in 476?

5. Explain the following terms: Arian Christian, Dark Ages, Middle Ages, Byzantine Empire.

6. Why do you think the Anglo-Saxons took such a long time to conquer England?

7. Explain briefly the importance of: (*a*) Clovis, (*b*) Justinian.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW EUROPE: ENGLAND AND ABROAD

Factors in the New Europe

THE new Europe that gradually arose, like a phoenix, from the ruins of the old was the result of three forces or factors:

(1) The legacy of the ancient world, especially of Rome.

(2) The new blood and vigour of the Teutonic tribes.

(3) The healing and unifying influence of the Christian religion.

(1) *The Roman Legacy.* The Roman Empire had summed up the civilization of the ancient world—of Egypt, Babylonia, Palestine, and Greece. It had also made contributions of its own: how to govern a wide empire, wise laws, the Latin language, good roads, public buildings, and city-life. Much of this decayed through neglect or was destroyed by the German tribes. But much was also preserved, because the invaders respected it, or because it was too strong to be easily destroyed. Thus the Goths, under Theodoric, had drawn up a code of laws that contained many Roman laws. The Latin language in many places proved too strong for the Teutonic dialects of the conquerors, and new languages based upon Latin grew up. On the Continent as in England, Roman roads remained the best for more than a thousand years. Much of the civilization of the Greek and Roman world continued also in the Byzantine Empire. We have seen how Justinian's Code preserved the best of Roman law. This in time reached the west. At Constantinople was preserved much of the literature, philosophy, and science of Greece and Rome, but western Europe did not draw freely upon this treasure-house till the capture of

Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 sent scholars fleeing with their books and manuscripts to the west.

(2) *The Teutonic Contribution.* The Teutonic tribes made their contribution also. They brought their language. They believed in freedom, and possessed a strong system of local government by means of ton-, folk-, and shire-moots. This corrected the old Roman method of bringing every one under one central ruler who governed like an eastern despot. They loved agriculture and country-life, without which city-life is like a tree without roots, as the Roman Empire had discovered to its cost. But above all the Teutons brought new blood and vigour and a more healthy outlook into a world which had begun to grow old and weak even before it was attacked.

In some countries the Roman influence proved stronger than the Teutonic. These Latin or Romance countries, as they are called, include modern France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Their laws and methods of government have been influenced mostly by Rome, while their languages are based upon Latin.

Other countries in Europe are more Teutonic than Roman. Germany and Scandinavia are among these, but this is not surprising, as they were never part of the Roman Empire. England, however, is also Teutonic. She possesses a strong system of local government, and has very little Roman law. The language we speak is derived mainly from the Anglo-Saxon dialects of the fifth and sixth centuries; this is most true of words for common objects or feelings like 'sun,' 'summer,' 'hand,' 'heart' (compare modern German *Sonne*, *Sommer*, *Hand*, *Herz*). We also have many words (about one-quarter) that have come from Latin or French; but most of these were introduced after the Norman Conquest, and are words of learning or higher civilization, like 'history,' 'council,' 'charity' (in French *histoire*, *conseil*, *charité*; in Latin *historia*, *concilia*, *caritas*). Our language and civilization are definitely Anglo-Saxon in origin.

A few countries like Belgium and Switzerland which were on the frontier of the Roman Empire are a mixture of the two factors. Some of their people are mainly Latin or Romance, and others are Teutonic. This often produces problems which can be solved only by wise handling and patience.

(3) *The Christian Church.* Christianity was a common factor to *all* the new nations. It was soon introduced to those German tribes that were still heathen; while those Germans who were Arians were soon converted to the Roman beliefs. Thus throughout the new Europe the Church acted as a unifying force, making people of different races realize they were all one body.

In many ways the Church carried on the practices of the Roman Empire. It used Latin in its books and services. Provinces and dioceses (ruled over by archbishops and bishops) were often the same as the old Roman areas of government. But the most striking likeness was the way in which the bishops of Rome took the place of the old Roman emperors. The papacy, or rule of the Pope (from the Latin *papa*, meaning 'father'), has been described as 'the ghost of the Roman Empire.'

Many reasons helped to make the Pope the supreme ruler over Christendom. It was said that St Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, to whom Christ had given the keys of Heaven, had passed on his power to the bishops of Rome. The Eternal City of Rome had all the glamour of a thousand years of history, and its bishops could not fail to be important. Further, when Constantine and others shifted their courts to new capitals, the bishop remained as the most important person in Rome, and in the troublous fifth and sixth centuries he had often to act as the ordinary ruler of his city as well as its spiritual head. In such ways had the power of the Popes increased. At the time we have reached, the Pope, Gregory I or the Great (590–604), was a man of outstanding holiness and ability. He kept the Lombards of

Italy in check, helped to win them and others from Arianism, and sent Augustine to England to convert the Anglo-Saxons from heathenism.

Gregory the Pope and Augustine the monk—these men stood for the two strongest forces in the Church. The Pope ruled from his centre at Rome; the monks scattered throughout Christendom were his staunchest allies. In 529 an Italian monk, St Benedict, had drawn up a set of regulations for those who had gathered round him. This Rule of St Benedict was soon accepted as a way of life by the majority of monks in the west (see Chapter VIII). Pope Gregory himself had become a Benedictine in early life; Augustine was a Benedictine when he came to England. Later the Benedictines erected some of the most noble of our churches, including those at Canterbury and Westminster, which were originally churches attached to their monasteries.

PAPAL ARMS

According to the well-known passage in *Matthew* (xvi, 19), Christ gave to St Peter the "keys of the Kingdom of Heaven," with the power "to bind and to loose." These keys are always represented in the Papal Arms, together with the tiara, or headdress, worn by the Popes on certain occasions.

Let us now consider in more detail the way in which England and other countries settled down after the barbarian invasions had ceased.

(A) ENGLAND

The Mission of St Augustine

The Anglo-Saxons were heathen. They believed in many gods and in a future life in Valhalla where their warriors could pass their time in warlike pursuits and in eating and drinking. It is from their gods and goddesses that we have obtained many of the names of our days:

Sunday is the day of the sun.

Monday is the day of the moon.

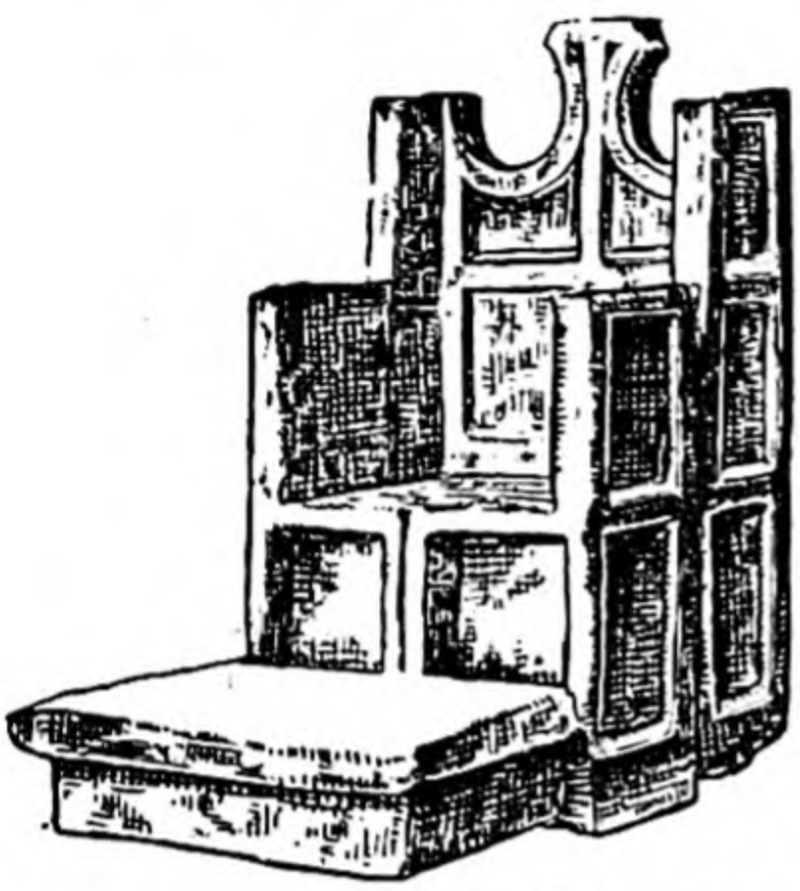
Tuesday is the day of Tiw, the god of war.

Wednesday is the day of Woden (or Odin), the chief of the gods.

Thursday is the day of Thor, the god of thunder.

Friday is the day of Freya, the goddess of love and beauty.

Saturday is the day of Saturn, the Roman god of agriculture.



St Augustine's Chair
Canterbury Cathedral.

Nearly every one knows of the story of Gregory and the English slave-boys; but it is worth retelling. Some fair-haired and blue-eyed boys from Deira, a district in Northumbria, were for sale in the slave-market at Rome. Gregory, who at this time was a Benedictine abbot, asked who they were. On being told that they were Angles he replied, "Not Angles, but Angels." Furthermore, on learning that they came from Deira, whose king was Ælla, he exclaimed, "They shall be rescued from the wrath [in Latin, *de ira*] to come, and Alleluia shall be sung in the realm of Ælla."

Gregory kept his word. He himself was too busy to visit England after he had been elected Pope, but he sent his friend, Augustine, with forty monks. In 597 Augustine landed in Kent, whose King, Ethelbert, had married a Christian Princess from France named Bertha. Augustine was welcomed by Ethelbert, and very soon his message of the Gospel was accepted by the King and many of his people. Augustine became the first Bishop (later Archbishop) of Canterbury, and rebuilt for himself an old church on the very site where Canterbury Cathedral now stands. The chair in which he is said to have sat as bishop can still be seen in the Cathedral, and ever since his time the Archbishop

ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

of Canterbury has been the Primate, or chief bishop, of all England.

The First Conversion of Northumbria by the Roman Church

In the seventh century the greatest of the English kingdoms was Northumbria. Edwin, its King, had extended his dominions to the Firth of Forth and had founded Edinburgh, named after him. He had married a daughter of Ethelbert of Kent, and there went with her into the bleak and distant north one of Augustine's disciples, Paulinus.

Edwin allowed Paulinus to preach the Gospel, and many converts were made. The King himself hung back. At length in 627 Edwin summoned a special meeting of his wise men (called by the Anglo-Saxons *Witan*, or *Witenagemot*) to debate the merits of Christianity. Paulinus found an unexpected ally in Coifi, the high priest of the old heathen religion. Coifi was the first to break the idols he had formerly worshipped. The scene is vividly described by the Venerable Bede, who wrote an *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* one hundred years later.

> Having, therefore, girt a sword about him, with a spear in his hand, he mounted the King's stallion and proceeded to the idols. The multitude, beholding it, concluded he was distracted; but he lost no time, for as soon as he drew near the temple he profaned the same, casting into it the spear which he held; and rejoicing in the knowledge of the worship of the true God, he commanded his companions to destroy the temple, with all its enclosures, by fire.[1]

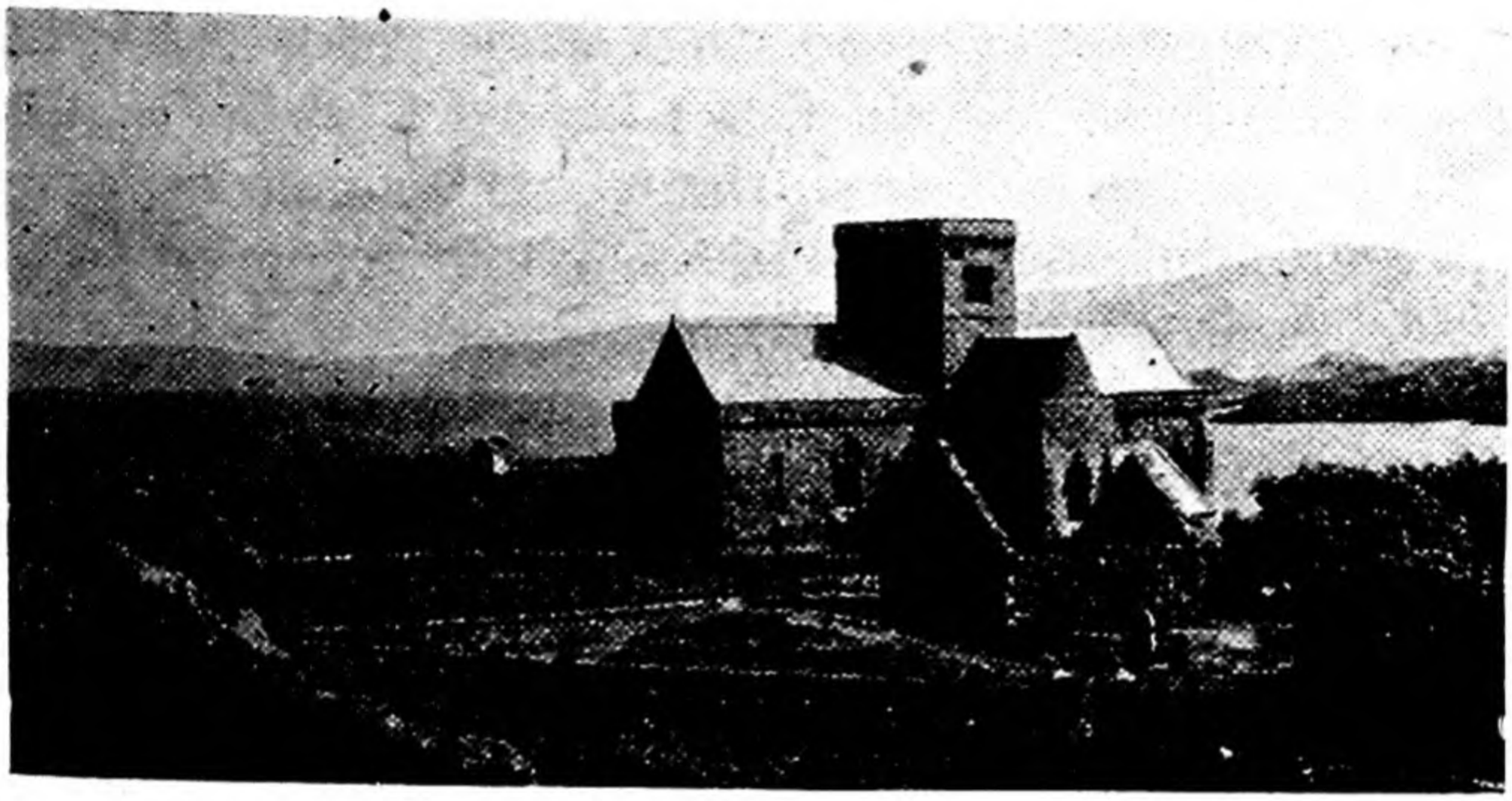
Edwin was converted, and on Easter Sunday, 627, was baptized at York. His example was followed by so many of his subjects that in one place Paulinus was kept busy instructing and baptizing them for thirty-six days, from morning to night. Paulinus became the first Bishop of York;

[1] From the translation published by J. M. Dent & Co.

at the present day the Archbishop of York is second only to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Second Conversion of Northumbria by the Celts

Christianity in Northumbria did not last long. The heathen King of Mercia, Penda, defeated and slew Edwin.



IONA CATHEDRAL
Photo D. B. MacCulloch

Paulinus fled, and many of the Northumbrians gave up their Christianity as quickly as they had previously embraced it. A few years later, another Northumbrian King, Oswald, decided to reintroduce Christianity; but this time it was not the Roman Christians but the Celtic Christians who came to preach the Gospel.

It will be remembered that some of the Britons had become Christian towards the end of the Roman occupation. These Celtic Christians had fled from the heathen Anglo-Saxons to the more remote parts of our islands, where their faith, far from dying out, had shown astonishing signs of life. As early as 432 one of the Celtic Christians, St Patrick, whose birthplace was probably in Wales, had carried the Gospel-message to Ireland, where he laboured for thirty years. St David of Wales was another Celtic missionary, but

little is definitely known of his life. The names of Celtic saints are preserved in Cornish villages like St Ives and St Just. The most famous of Celtic Christians was St Columba, an Irish noble who preached the Gospel in Scotland and founded there the monastery of Iona (563) on one of the wild islands, off the west coast of Scotland. Iona became the headquarters or the 'Rome' of the Celtic Christians. It was here that Oswald had found safety while Penda was ravaging his kingdom. Oswald had accepted Christianity from the simple monks who dwelt there, and now, on his return to Northumbria, he sought their aid in reconverting his people. A wise and holy monk named Aidan answered Oswald's call, and for a second time the Northumbrians were converted (635). The heathen Penda once more raised his head. He struck down Oswald as he had slain Edwin. But his own death in 655 removed the last great champion of the old heathen gods, and soon Mercia itself was Christianized.

The Synod of Whitby (664)

Oswald's successor, Oswy, soon had to decide whether to continue with the Celtic form of Christianity that existed in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and northern England, or to change to the Roman form that existed throughout most of England and Europe.

The two Churches differed over the date when Easter should be celebrated and the kind of tonsure (or head-shave) that priests should have. Celtic priests shaved from ear to ear, leaving long hair hanging down behind; while Roman priests shaved the top only, leaving round the head a fringe of hair which some likened to Christ's crown of thorns. Behind these rather trivial questions were others of far greater importance. Roman Christianity was well disciplined and organized, but the Celtic monks had no real rule or discipline at all. Rome, too, was a much greater civilizing force than Iona or any other Celtic centre was likely to be.

The real question at issue was whether England was to remain separate from the Continent, or whether she was to be drawn through her religion into the general life of the western nations.

Oswy summoned a meeting, or synod, at Whitby to decide the issue. Representatives of both sides attended. The Roman champion said that the Head of his Church was descended from St Peter, who had been given the keys of Heaven. The Celtic champion admitted that neither Columba nor any other Celt had been given such power. Oswy decided in favour of St Peter and his keys. According to Bede the King said, "St Peter is the door-keeper, whom I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, there should be none to open them."

The wisdom of Oswy's decision was shown a few years later, when the Pope sent over to England as Archbishop of Canterbury a learned Greek, Theodore, from St Paul's old city of Tarsus. Theodore was a splendid organizer, and he divided the country into dioceses and parishes, under the rule of bishops and priests. England still consisted of several kingdoms, but Theodore ignored this. and looked upon England as one country under his own control. This unity in religion must have been quite an important factor in helping, more than a century later, to produce unity in government.

How Wessex became Supreme over England

Soon after their settlement in England the Anglo-Saxons formed themselves into seven kingdoms (Wessex, Northumbria, Mercia, Kent, Sussex, Essex, and East Anglia), sometimes called the *Heptarchy*. These seven kingdoms were not always well defined or even always in existence. The 200 years following the Battle of Chester in 613 were years of struggle between these kingdoms, with rulers and bound-

aries changing so often that it is bewildering to follow the exact course of events.

Three kingdoms in turn became supreme: Northumbria in the seventh century, under Edwin, Oswald, and Oswy; Mercia in the eighth century, under Offa; and Wessex in the ninth century and later, under Egbert and his descendants.

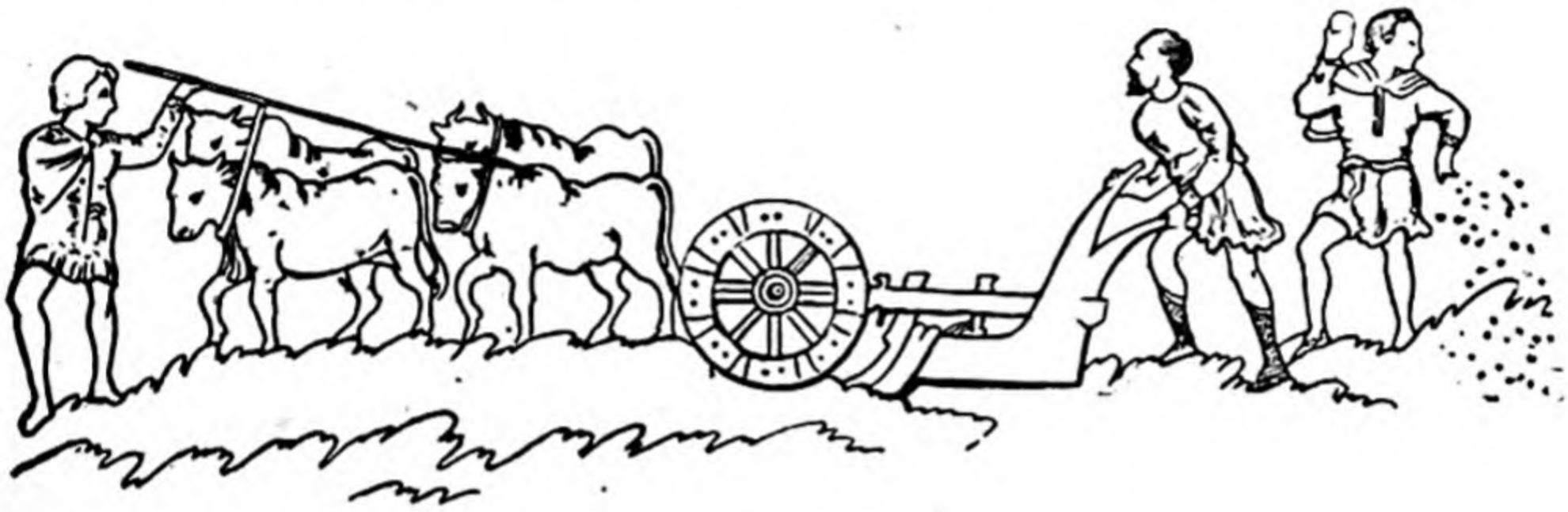
We have already seen how Edwin, Oswald, and Oswy spread Christianity in Northumbria and how they struggled against Mercia and its heathen King, Penda. Mercia was the middle kingdom on the borders of Wales ('Mercia' comes from the word 'march,' meaning a boundary), and in the eighth century it reached the height of its power under Offa (757–796). Offa exchanged letters with the great King of the Franks, Charlemagne. He beat back the Welsh and built a rampart called 'Offa's Dyke,' from the Dee to the Wye.

After Mercia's supremacy it was the turn of Wessex. In Offa's time the King of Wessex, Egbert (802–839), had taken refuge at the court of Charlemagne, where doubtless he learned much of the art of government. On his return Egbert subdued the Welsh of Cornwall, defeated the Mercians (from whom he took Kent, Sussex, and Essex), and was acknowledged as overlord by the King of Northumbria. From now till the Norman Conquest, apart from 25 years under Danish kings, the house of Wessex was supreme. But other kings continued to exist in other parts of England, and the 'supremacy' of Wessex, which depended merely upon the strength of her kings, was often insecure. The kingdom of Wessex stretching across England south of the Thames, was the richest part of England. It contained London and Canterbury, the commercial and religious capitals; it was well situated for communication with the rest of Europe; the Thames formed a good boundary to the north; while the political capital, Winchester, was favourably situated and safely placed in the centre of the kingdom.

Life in Anglo-Saxon England

The Anglo-Saxons were tillers of the soil and led very simple lives. They disliked the Roman cities, which they neglected or destroyed. Many of their small 'tons' and 'hams' were built a mile or so away from the Roman roads, which they probably thought would be too busy for their liking.

They carried on their agriculture in common. The whole



PLOUGHING IN ANGLO-SAXON TIMES

From an eleventh-century manuscript. Notice the man scattering seeds broadcast.

of the land was regarded as belonging to the village, or to its chief man or lord. It was split up into different parts, some for pasturage, some for hay, and some for crops, while surrounding the village was the waste and woodland, where timber for fuel and building purposes could be obtained. The arable, or crop-growing, land usually consisted of three fields, one field growing wheat or rye, another barley, and the third lying fallow to give the soil a rest. The next year the fields would change round, and so on till the end of the third year, when they would begin all over again. Villagers held their land in widely scattered strips, usually 22 yards wide by 220 yards long, and in return they had to do so much work on the land of their lord. The Anglo-Saxon village was really the forerunner of the Norman manor, which it closely resembles, and we shall learn much more about this communal system of agriculture when we examine the manor in Chapter VII.

Money was practically unknown, but the villager had

little use for it, as most of his needs were supplied by himself or others inside his own village. His house was simple—a wooden, mud-covered hut consisting of one room with a hole in the roof for the smoke. His food was plain and lacking in variety. Meat was scarce, but sometimes pork and beef were eaten; rye bread was commoner than wheat; beans and peas were the chief vegetables, and beer the chief drink. Fortunately butter, cheese, and eggs were fairly plentiful.

Work lasted from dawn till dusk, when the people retired to bed—on the hard earthen floor! It was a busy, primitive life with few comforts and many hardships; but probably many of our Saxon ancestors were as contented with their lives as their twentieth-century descendants.

(B) ABROAD

Europe after the Barbarian Invasions

In the east the strongest power was the Byzantine Empire. It included the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor, and the Near East (Syria, etc.), and since the reconquests of Justinian, North Africa and part of Italy.

In the west Italy was weakened by being divided between Lombards, Byzantines, and the Pope. The strongest of the barbarian kingdoms was France, but this was often in danger of splitting into separate parts, while the descendants of Clovis became so weak as to be called *rois fainéants,* or 'do-nothing kings.' But it had two sources of strength: the Roman Church, which you remember had been accepted by Clovis, and the mayors of the palace, who were the chief ministers of the king. These mayors of the palace really ruled as if *they* were the kings, allowing the kings only the privilege of wearing their hair long, which was a sign of royalty among the Franks.

East of the Rhine and north of the Danube Europe was still heathen and savage. In Germany dwelt the Saxons;

beyond these were Slavs and Asiatic tribes; in the Scandinavian countries were Danes and Norsemen—wild, seafaring folk who, two centuries later, were to become the scourge of Christendom. But before the Viking raids terrorized Europe, a new danger appeared—the sudden, swift expansion of Islam, the new religion founded by the prophet Mohammed.

Mohammed, Prophet of Allah

Mohammed was an Arabian camel-driver, born at Mecca about the year 570. His caravan-journeys brought him into contact with men and ideas, and he learned something of the Jewish and Christian religions. He thought deeply about religious matters, and one day, he declared, God's messenger appeared to him and bade him preach a new religion to the Arabs. The main belief of this new religion was very simple and was summed up in the creed, "There is no god but God (Allah), and Mohammed is his prophet." Thus Mohammed taught that there was only one God, and that Mohammed was the prophet or messenger of this God. He recognized other prophets, such as Abraham, Moses, and Christ, but said that he was the last and greatest of them.

Mohammed now began to preach to the Arabs; but the Arabs were worshippers of many gods, and were divided into jealous tribes who were unwilling to accept the teaching of one man. In 622 Mohammed was forced to flee to the neighbouring city of Medina. This was the famous 'Flight' or 'Hegira,' from which Mohammedans date their years. The letters 'A.H.' (*Anno Hegirae*) mean so many years after the 'Flight.'

In Medina the new prophet was able to spread his ideas and win converts. In 630 he re-entered Mecca as a conqueror. Two years later he died.

The new religion thus created is often called Islam, which means 'submission to God.' This is because Mohammedans accept whatever happens as being the will of Allah. Soon after Mohammed's death his disciples collected all his

teachings, and put them together in the *Koran*, the sacred book of the Mohammedans, corresponding to the Christian Bible. Islam has no priests or altars, and permits no images or religious pictures to be made. Mohammedans are supposed to deal honourably with their fellow-creatures, take care of the weak, help the poor, and pray five times a day. They are forbidden to eat pork or drink wine.

In one important respect Islam differed from Christianity. It was a fighting religion which proclaimed the righteousness of the 'holy war' against unbelievers, and promised paradise for those who fell in battle. "Whosoever falls in battle," says the *Koran*, "his sins are forgiven." This so inspired Mohammedan warriors that their swords carried the new faith to the centre of France within one hundred years after Mohammed's death.

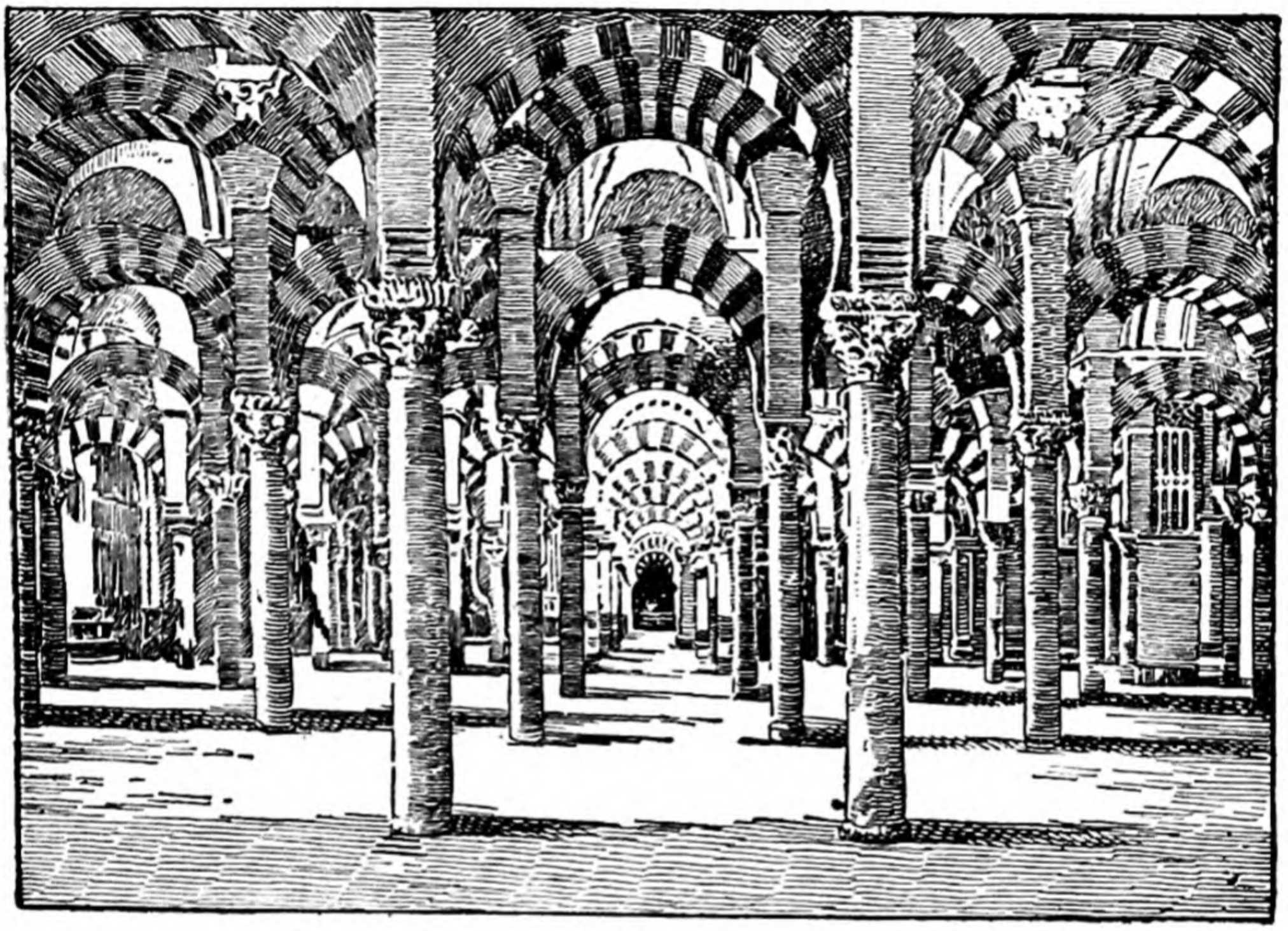
The Conquests of Islam

After Mohammed's death Islam expanded in every possible direction. Northward, Palestine (the birthplace of Christianity) and Syria were captured, but attacks upon Constantinople were repulsed. Eastward, Mesopotamia and Persia were overrun, and soon the borders of India were reached. Later India itself was invaded, and at the present day the existence of many Mohammedans living side by side with Hindus sometimes leads to disturbances in India. Westward, the Mohammedans conquered Egypt and north Africa. Everywhere large numbers of converts were made, though usually anyone who kept his former religion was leniently treated.

In 711 an army of Arabs and North Africans crossed the Straits of Gibraltar into Spain. Their leader, Tarik, has given his name to these Straits, for Gibraltar is a shortened form of *Gibal al Tarik* ('the Mountain of Tarik'). The Visigothic kingdom was easily subdued. Practically the whole of Spain became Moslem.

They next attacked France. The Pyrenees were crossed,

and southern France was plundered. The Moslems advanced as far as Tours, where they were met by a Frankish host under the Mayor of the Palace, Charles Martel ('the Hammer'). This was in 732, exactly one hundred years after Mohammed's death. The Frankish infantry stood im-



INTERIOR OF THE MOSQUE OF CORDOVA

Begun in the eighth century and gradually enlarged in later centuries. At one time there were 1200 pillars supporting the open Moorish arches, but many have since been destroyed.

movable as a wall against the enemy's cavalry, and under cover of night the Moslems deserted their camp, spoils and all. The Moslem tide had turned. Soon Islam was driven back across the Pyrenees, but Spain remained under the Moslems for a great part of the Middle Ages.

Arabs and Moors were more than mere conquerors; they were also great civilizers. Their wide conquests brought them into touch with the ancient civilization of Persia and with the remnants of Greek civilization scattered throughout the east since the time of Alexander the Great. They produced from these a civilization that for several centuries was better than

anything to be found in western Europe. They were skilled craftsmen and farmers; they encouraged commerce; they extended our knowledge of geography. They founded universities at Cairo, Cordova, and Bagdad, where thousands of manuscripts were preserved. They translated the writings of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, into Arabic. Christian students visited these universities and learned about Aristotle from these Arabic translations. They excelled in medicine and mathematics; they practically created the study of algebra, while it was they who introduced to Europe the figures (mainly of Hindu origin) which we now use in doing our sums. They were great builders, as remains in Spain remind us. Some of their stories from the *Arabian Nights* (such as "Sinbad the Sailor" and "Aladdin") are famous throughout the world.

Perhaps an easy way of understanding what we owe to them is to consider some of the words they have given us: damask (a cloth made in Damascus), muslin (from Mosul, in Mesopotamia), cotton, zero, algebra, alchemy, alkali, and almanac (note that the prefix 'al' in Arabic means 'the').

A New Royal House over the Franks

Charles Martel, the victor at Tours, was the founder of a new line of Frankish kings, called the Carolingians. He himself never became king, but was content, as Mayor of the Palace, with the royal power.

His son, Pepin, sometimes called 'the Short,' determined to bring the farce of the 'do-nothing kings' to an end. Pepin first obtained the support of the Pope, who declared that "he who had the power should also have the Crown," and at a great meeting of the Frankish warriors in 751 he was raised high upon a shield and hailed as King. The former king was put away in a monastery.

In return for the Pope's support Pepin protected him against the Lombards. He invaded Italy, took back some lands that the Lombards had seized, and gave them to the

Pope to rule. Thus, in addition to being the spiritual head of Christendom, the Pope was made into a ruler of Italian territory. The Popes remained rulers of part of Italy till 1870, *i.e.*, eleven centuries after Pepin's gift. Whether this was good for them and for the Church is very difficult to say; but there is no doubt that later on it was bad for Italy, because it prevented her from becoming a united nation.

In 768, on Pepin's death, his son, Charles the Great, better known as Charlemagne, became King.

The Conquests of Charlemagne

Charlemagne was the greatest warrior-king that the Franks, or indeed any of the barbarian tribes, produced. In person he was of great strength and courage; it was said that he could straighten with his hands four horseshoes fixed together. His favourite sports were riding, hunting, and swimming. Much of his life was spent in war, and most of his wars were fought against the heathen or in protecting the Pope, for Charlemagne continued the friendship of his family with the Church and its head.

Like his father, Charlemagne invaded Italy to help the Pope against the Lombards. But he took stronger measures than Pepin had taken. He defeated the Lombards, deposed their King, and made himself King of the Lombards. He placed on his head the famous Iron Crown that Lombard kings had worn for nearly 200 years.

Charlemagne turned next to Mohammedan Spain. An expedition into north Spain was not very successful, and the Franks had to retreat. While returning across the Pyrenees, the Frankish rearguard was attacked, and one of its leaders, Roland, was killed. Later on in France there grew up many legends concerning this Roland, much like the stories of King Arthur in England (see Chapter XII). Towards the end of his reign Charlemagne was more successful in Spain, and a district was captured and made into a frontier state called 'the Spanish March.'

Charlemagne's other wars were mainly against the heathen Saxons of Germany. Altogether he waged about thirty campaigns before he conquered and converted them. In these Saxon wars the Christian King often acted in a most un-Christianlike manner, killing and massacring thousands of his enemies who had dared to revolt.

CHARLEMAGNE

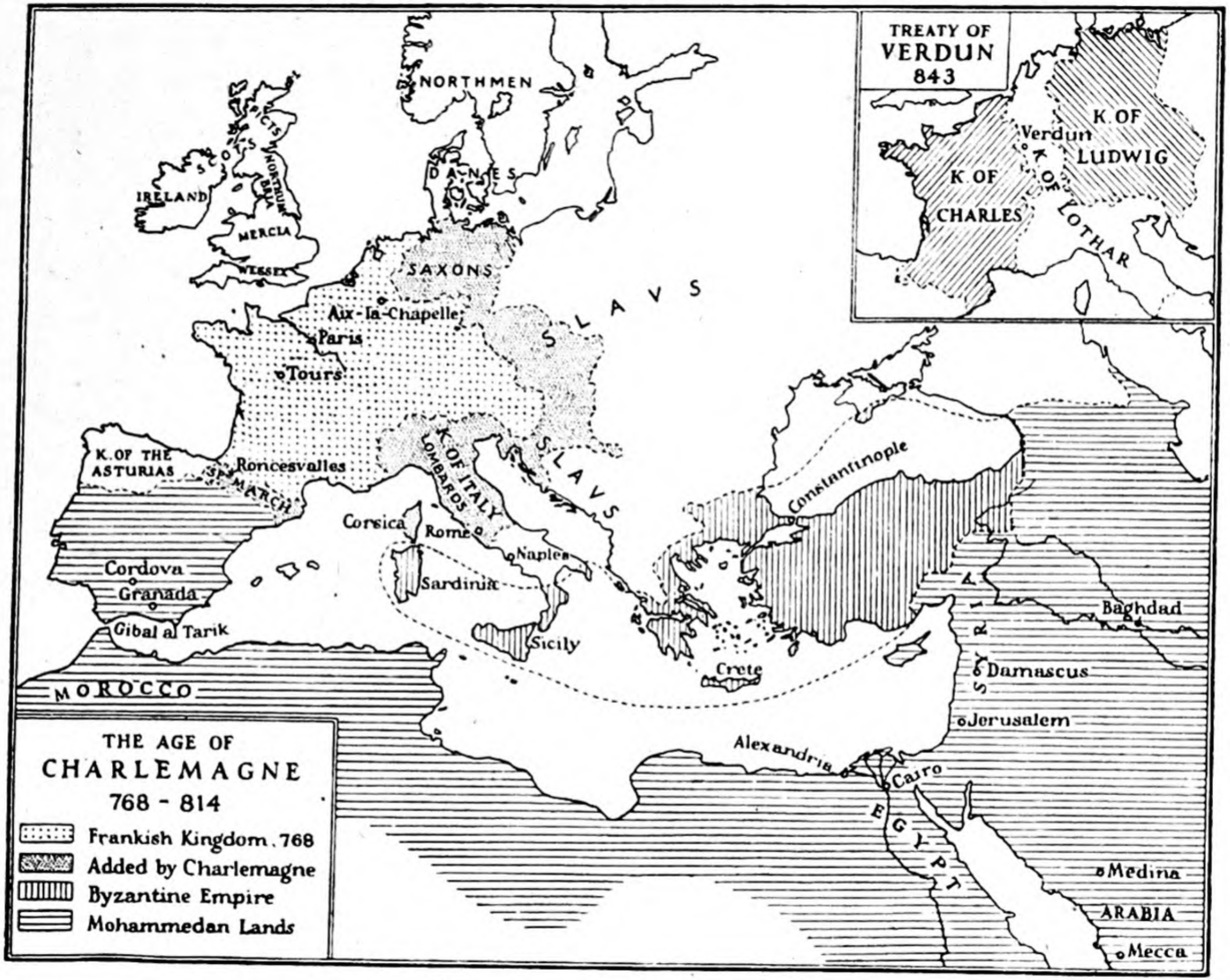
A mosaic picture, made during the lifetime of Charlemagne, and probably a fair likeness of him.

Lateran Museum, Rome

These conquests made Charlemagne's dominions the largest in Europe—larger even than the Eastern Roman Empire. Charlemagne governed them well and justly. He sent round 'messengers,' or *missi*, to see that the local lords did their work properly. He protected the poor and defenceless. He saw that bishops, priests, and monks did not neglect their duties. He encouraged learning and education, which in those days were in the hands of the Church. He set a good example himself by collecting at his court famous scholars from all over Europe. The busy King himself used to keep a writing-book under his couch so that in his spare moments he could practise writing. We are told, however, that he made little progress.

Charlemagne, Roman Emperor

The memory of the Roman Empire had never died out in the west. Men still longed for an emperor as their ruler, ready to defend the Church, to slay or convert the heathen, to protect and order the lives of his subjects—in fact, to act


TREATY OF VERDUN 843
K. OF LUDWIG
Verdun
K. OF CHARLES
K. OF LOTHAR
NORTHMEN
DANES
IRELAND
PICTS
NORTHUMBRIA
MERCIA
WESSEX
SAXONS
Aix-la-Chapelle
Paris
Tours
SLAVS
SLAVS
K. OF THE ASTURIAS
Roncesvalles
SPANISH MARCH
K. OF LOMBARDS ITALY
Corsica
Rome
Naples
Sardinia
Sicily
Cordova
Granada
Gibal al Tarik
MOROCCO
Constantinople
Crete
SYRIA
Damascus
Baghdad
Jerusalem
Alexandria
Cairo
EGYPT
Medina
ARABIA
Mecca
THE AGE OF CHARLEMAGNE
768 - 814
Frankish Kingdom, 768
Added by Charlemagne
Byzantine Empire
Mohammedan Lands

as God's representative on earth in matters of government, just as the Pope acted in matters of religion. The eastern emperor was too far away to satisfy this desire. But who in the west was more fitting than Charles the Great, the proven champion of the Church, the greatest figure of his time, and the occupant of the throne of Clovis? Events turned this dream into reality.

In the year 800 Charles was in Rome inquiring into a dispute between the Pope, Leo III, and some of the Pope's subjects. On Christmas Day Charles attended Mass in the old church of St Peter. The church was packed. There was a feeling that something unusual, something momentous, was about to happen. What *did* happen is best described in the words of an old chronicle:

> Now when the King upon the most holy day of the Lord's birth was rising to the mass after praying before the confession of the blessed Peter the Apostle, Leo the Pope, with the consent of all the bishops and priests and of the senate of the Franks and likewise of the Romans, set a golden crown upon his head, the Roman people also shouting aloud.

The crown was the crown of the Caesars, and the shout of the people was "To Charles Augustus, crowned of God, the mighty and peace-giving Emperor, long life and victory." Charlemagne was now Roman Emperor, the heir of Augustus, of Constantine, of Justinian. The west had an emperor once more.

A great historian[1] has called this coronation "the central event of the Middle Ages." It showed that the German tribes fully accepted the Roman idea of a universal empire now that one of their number was actually Roman Emperor. It showed the importance of the Pope; he had actually placed the crown on Charlemagne's head, and later Popes claimed from this that only they could make or unmake

[1] James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire.*

emperors. It was the beginning of a line of 'Holy Roman Emperors' that lasted in western Europe, with a few interruptions, down to 1806 (see Chapter IX). It was also an attempt to transfer the position of Roman emperor from Constantinople back to Rome again; but this was only partly successful, as the eastern emperors continued till the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and regarded themselves as the real heirs of the Caesars.

The coronation naturally increased the importance of Charles, and afterwards we find him interfering more freely in the affairs of the Church. He lived to enjoy his new title for fourteen years. His reign shines forth like a beacon in these 'dark ages.' It corresponded on the Continent with the reign of Egbert and the growing supremacy of Wessex in England. A new Europe was appearing. But soon after Charlemagne's death in 814 the growing light was dimmed. New barbarian and heathen tribes ravaged Europe, and the 'dark ages' were prolonged another two centuries.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What causes led to the growth of the power of the Pope? What do the keys in the Papal coat-of-arms refer to?

2. Mention four important ways in which the Anglo-Saxons differed from the Romans.

3. Give an account of the work of: (*a*) Augustine, (*b*) Paulinus, (*c*) Aidan.

4. What was decided at the Synod of Whitby? What was its importance?

5. What were the three most important Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms in England? What helped Wessex to become supreme in the end?

6. Write a brief account of the civilization created by the Arabs.

7. Write notes on St Benedict, Iona, Theodore of Tarsus, Charles Martel.

8. Mention three ways in which Charlemagne earned his title of 'the Great.'

9. Describe how the Empire was restored in the west in 800.

10. What history is contained in the meaning or source of the following words: Pope, Wednesday, Islam, Gibraltar, Mercia, algebra?

CHAPTER V

THE AGE OF THE VIKINGS

The Return of the Dark Ages

In the ninth and tenth centuries the Dark Ages returned, and Europe was once more plunged into turmoil. The Empire of Charlemagne fell to pieces. Three dread foes hemmed Europe in on land and sea—the Vikings, the Mohammedans, and the Magyars. In England our own government was helpless until the strong rule of Alfred the Great checked the advance of the Danes and restored the power of the kings of Wessex.

The Break-up of Charlemagne's Empire

Charlemagne died in 814. His successors were not able to keep his vast Empire together. By the year 843 it was definitely split into three parts by the Treaty of Verdun. Forty years after this treaty one of Charlemagne's successors, called Charles the Fat, did succeed for a few years in re-uniting most of the old Empire. But he was an incapable ruler and was soon deposed (888). Then, in the words of an old chronicler, "a crop of many kinglets sprang up over Europe."

Charlemagne's Empire was now ended. The reasons are not hard to find. Charlemagne had been a great statesman and soldier; his successors were weaker and often quarrelled among themselves. They could not hold his vast Empire together. Indeed, it is doubtful whether Charlemagne himself could have succeeded in doing this, had he lived much longer. Inside the Empire were men of different nations and races (Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians) who spoke different languages and had different customs. In fact, it is

during these troublous times that we see the faint beginings of France, Germany, and Italy as separate nations. Then again, governments in those days were too weak to rule vast areas; roads were poor, officials dishonest, barons and churchmen too keen on increasing their power in their own districts to carry out the orders of the government. This led to the growth of feudalism. Men who were poor and weak found it safer to rely on the local baron to protect them than on the government, which might be hundreds of miles away. In this way the barons obtained great power in their districts, for they did not give their protection for nothing. This growth of baronial power and feudalism was helped by outside dangers—the attacks of Vikings, Mohammedans, and Magyars. A chronicler of these times says that Charlemagne from the window of his palace once saw the dark sails of the Vikings and wept as he thought of the misery that his empire would suffer after his death.

Saracen Pirates

The Mohammedans, or Saracens, as they came to be called, had been driven back into Spain by Charles Martel and Charlemagne. Defeated on land, they turned their attention to the sea. Bands of Saracen pirates sailed the western Mediterranean, attacking ships and plundering everywhere within their reach. Italy suffered most of all. In 846 the suburbs of Rome were sacked. Many cities had to admit Saracen garrisons or pay tribute. The only fleet capable of dealing with the pirates was the Byzantine fleet, but this was too busy in the eastern Mediterranean to worry much about the western. The island of Sicily, which belonged to the eastern Empire, was gradually conquered by the Saracens.

Magyar Horsemen

The Magyars, or Hungarians, were a much more terrible foe than the Saracens. They were an Asiatic race, rather

like the Huns of Attila in the fifth century. Like them, they were skilful horsemen whose only objects seemed to be to kill and plunder. In the ninth and tenth centuries they were the terror of eastern and central Europe. Germany suffered most of all; but Italy and France were not safe from these swift, mounted archers who for nearly a century harassed Christendom.

At last a strong family arose in Saxony which was able to check them. Henry the Fowler (so called from his love of hunting birds) devised ways of stopping their inroads. His son, Otto the Great, inflicted a severe defeat upon them on the banks of the River Lech (955), and forced them to settle down in the country now known as Hungary. In the year 1000 their conversion to Christianity was begun.

Viking Sailors

The most powerful of all the foes of Christendom in the ninth and tenth centuries were the Vikings, known under different names as Northmen, Norsemen, Danes, and Swedes. These people were Teutonic in race, like the Saxons, Goths, and Franks of several centuries earlier; but, dwelling in the more distant regions of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, they had not taken part in the earlier movements that had broken up the Roman Empire. Nor had they become converted to Christianity. Indeed, hatred of the followers of Christ was one of their special characteristics and made them the terror of priests and monks.

They were fearless and experienced sailors. The coast of Norway and Sweden, with its numerous bays and creeks, was ideal for producing a race of hardy seamen. These creeks were called by the Norsemen *viks*, and it used to be thought that the Vikings were 'men of the creeks,' though probably the word means 'warriors.' From these creeks sailed the Vikings, urged on by love of adventure, desire for trade, and, above all, by the craving for plunder that they knew the towns and monasteries of Europe could satisfy.

Their long ships, dragon-shaped at the prow, were driven swiftly over the seas by sturdy rowers, assisted, when the wind was favourable, by a huge, square-shaped sail. Their largest ships, 70 feet long, carried 100 men or more, who slung their round shields over the sides of the ships for protection. Steering was by means of an oar at the stern, placed on the right side (starboard, or steer-board, side) of the boat.

VIKING SHIPS

A modern drawing based on contemporary descriptions and recent discoveries.

At first they plundered regions lying along the coasts or river-valleys, and then returned home with their gains. After a time, they began to make permanent settlements. Thus parts of Europe came to be studded with Viking settlements, which, after the settlers had given up their savage ways, brought many benefits to the countries where they were situated.

Viking Voyages and Settlements

The expeditions of the Vikings took them to the farthest points of Europe, and even beyond.

Our own islands were naturally among the first to suffer.

The earliest recorded raid was in 787, long before the English kingdoms were strong or united enough to defend themselves. A special prayer was composed by the defenceless Saxons: "From the fury of the Northmen, good Lord deliver us." Scotland and her many islands fell a prey to their attacks. The Irish Sea became almost their lake, England was now attacked from the west as well as from the east; the names of many places in the English Lake District remind us of Norse settlements there. In Ireland rich monasteries were plundered, but the towns of Dublin, Limerick, Waterford, and Wexford were founded by the Danes.

On the Continent the rivers of north Germany, France, and Spain were penetrated. The old capital of Charlemagne, Aix-la-Chapelle, was captured and plundered; the Vikings stabled their horses in the church that the great Emperor had built there. The city of Paris, built on an island in the River Seine, suffered more than once from their raids. Some of their boldest spirits sailed into the Mediterranean, where their raids added to the terrors of the Saracen pirates.

The Baltic countries suffered from the attacks of the Swedes. Finland was conquered, and the Finns (an Asiatic race) brought under Swedish rule. Swedes penetrated into Russia and made the important towns of Novgorod and Kiev centres of their power. Several times they threatened Constantinople itself. In many ways the Swedes were the creators of the first Russian state. They founded a line of rulers which lasted for seven centuries. Their rule, once they had shaken off their early barbarism, brought strong and settled government. The word 'Russia' comes from 'Rus,' the name given by the people of these regions to their Swedish rulers.

The most daring of all voyages were those made across the North Atlantic. Iceland and Greenland were reached. The former attracted many Norse settlers, and has remained Norse in its civilization to the present day. In the Middle Ages it was one of the chief centres of Norse culture. In Iceland were first collected and written down the Norse

sagas and eddas. These were stories and poems told by the Vikings of their voyages and adventures and of the doings of their gods. From the eddas we learn of Odin and Thor, of Balder and the fatal mistletoe, of Valhalla (the hall of the slain), and of the Valkyries—a troop of divine maidens who rode through the air to decide battles and to choose warriors for Valhalla. The sagas tell us much of the lives and habits of the Vikings themselves. From them we learn how Leif Ericson, about the year 1000, made a voyage to lands even beyond Greenland, lands which in the south were mild enough for wild vines and wheat to grow. To these lands the name Vineland was given. There can be no doubt that parts of North America had been discovered 500 years before Christopher Columbus. But no settlements were made, and the memory of these discoveries passed out of the minds of men.

The Danes in England

The Danes had begun their attacks upon England about the year 790. Egbert of Wessex (the strong King who had made himself overlord of all England) was able to keep their raids in check. After his death in 839 the raids became more frequent and more terrible. A favourite plan of the Danes was to sail up the rivers, beach their boats, gather as many horses as they could, and then on horseback to harry the countryside. The poor Saxon peasants were no match for these mail-clad warriors with their dreaded battle-axes. No one knew when or where their next raid would be.

In the year 851 the Danes began to settle in England instead of returning home with their plunder. A party of them spent the winter in the Isle of Sheppey. Soon more and more Danes followed their example. The King of East Anglia, Edmund, was slain in battle against one of their bands; his shrine at Bury St Edmund's (the 'town of St Edmund') was visited by many pilgrims in the Middle Ages. In 871 the Danes pressed hard upon Wessex. The King of

Wessex, a grandson of Egbert, was aided by his brother, Alfred. "Nine battles were fought this year south of the Thames," says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. A few were victories for the English, but in most of them victory went to the Danes. After one battle, moreover, the King of Wessex died. His brother, Alfred, was chosen to succeed him. The reign of King Alfred (871–900) marks a turning-point.

King Alfred and the Danes

Alfred was only twenty-three years of age when called upon to wear the crown of Wessex. He had a hard task in front of him.

For several years the Danes left him in peace. Then, in the winter of 877 8, they made an unexpected attack upon his kingdom, and Alfred was forced to take refuge at Athelney, in the marshes of Somerset. Here, in ancient story, he is supposed to have burnt the cakes and to have visited the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel. Alfred collected an army of faithful followers and in the same year (878) defeated the Danes at Ethandun. This victory marked the turn of the tide, rather like the victory of Charles Martel over the Mohammedans at Tours. By the Treaty of Wedmore (878) the Danish leader, Guthrum, and his followers became Christians, and the Danes agreed to live north-east of a line from London to Chester. This district was called the Danelaw; it still retains evidences of its former Danish character in the dialects of its inhabitants, and in the numerous towns and villages ending in 'by,' and 'wick' (or 'wich')—the Danish words for 'town' and 'creek.'

ALFRED'S JEWEL

It is a mistake to think that Alfred got rid of the danger from the Danes once and for all. What he did was to impose a check upon them from which they never recovered. Other attacks were likely and, in fact, did occur.

Alfred wisely took precautions. He built earthen forts and garrisoned them with soldiers. He improved the *fyrd* (the Anglo-Saxon army) by dividing it into two parts, so that one part could stay behind to look after the fields, while the other part could follow him to war. He began the building of a navy so as to defeat the Danes by their own methods. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records how:

STATUE OF ALFRED AT WINCHESTER
Hamo Thornycroft, R.A.
Photo Woodbury

> King Alfred commanded long ships to be built against them [the Danes], which were full nigh twice as long as the others; some had sixty oars, others more; they were both swifter and steadier and higher, too, than the others.

Alfred has been well called 'the Father of the English Navy.' His methods were successful. The Danes made other attacks but were beaten back. The Danes of the Danelaw were persuaded to settle down, while fresh invaders soon found it was safer to go elsewhere.

King Alfred's 'Good Works'

Alfred is the only English king to have been called the 'Great.' His greatness lies not only in his repulse of the Danes, but in the good government he gave to his kingdom and the efforts he made to repair the ill-effects of a century of Danish attacks. He himself wished to be remembered by what he called his 'good works.'

Alfred collected many of the old laws and customs of the Saxons and had the best of them written down. More

important in those troublous days, he appointed officers to see that these laws were obeyed.

He worked hard for the Church, which had suffered especially from the Danish attacks. He rebuilt churches and monasteries and founded new ones. Many of the priests were so ignorant that they could not understand even their own service-books. To remedy this he appointed good and learned bishops, and established schools both for priests and others.

He himself was a good scholar. Like Charlemagne, he collected wise and learned men from all parts of the world at his court. He saw that there were not enough books in Anglo-Saxon for scholars to study, so he translated Latin books on religion, philosophy, history, and geography. One of the books he translated was Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*. Historians in particular should be grateful to King Alfred, for it was he who began the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the first history of our people in our native language. This record of events deals from early Anglo-Saxon times down to about 1150 and is the best single authority for our history from the times of the Danes onwards. It was begun by the monks at Winchester (Alfred's capital) and later continued by monks elsewhere. This chronicle and Alfred's translations fully justify another title which is often given to him, namely, 'the Father of English Prose.'

Alfred died in 900 at the age of 52, worn out by his work in peace and war for England.

The Northmen in France

Foiled in their attacks upon England, many of the Vikings turned their attention to France. Here they were able to win a second Danelaw for themselves. The King of France, tired of their attacks upon Paris, allowed them to settle in the valley of the lower Seine (911). Their leader was Rollo, nicknamed 'the Ganger' (or 'Walker'), because he was said to be too big for any horse to support him. He had to

acknowledge the French King as his overlord and accept Christianity. He agreed to these terms but refused to kiss the King's foot as a sign of homage; instead, he ordered one of his followers to do it, who did it so awkwardly that the King was overturned. The French Danelaw came to be called Normandy, after the Northmen or Normans who dwelt in it. The Normans soon picked up French ways, and, with their vigorous Viking blood, became for several centuries the leaders of European civilization.

The darkest years of the Viking Age were now past. Pirates and plunderers crossed the seas for another century, and governments and peoples still kept a watchful eye for their coming. But the biggest and the fiercest raids of these savage sailors were over, while the Viking settlers in the Danelaw and Normandy often joined with the natives in defending their homes from fresh attack. The Dark Ages were drawing to an end.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Draw a sketch-map of Europe, and show upon it the raids of: (*a*) Saracens, (*b*) Magyars, (*c*) Vikings, in the ninth and tenth centuries.

2. What reasons (*a*) inside, (*b*) outside, Charlemagne's Empire led to its decay?

3. Describe the Viking settlements in the Danelaw, Normandy, Russia, and Iceland.

4. On a map of England and Wales indicate the towns ending in 'by' or 'wick.' What part of the country are they in? Why?

5. What reasons justify Alfred's title of 'the Great'?

CHAPTER VI

THE END OF THE DARK AGES IN EUROPE AND ENGLAND

The Reawakening of Europe

In the face of Viking, Magyar, and Saracen raids Europe had fallen into a state of anarchy. Charlemagne's Empire had split up into three main divisions corresponding roughly with France, Germany, and Italy. But these themselves had split up into many smaller divisions, each under the rule of its local duke, count, or bishop. The title of 'emperor' continued, but the petty Italian nobles who managed to obtain it had little authority in their own country, let alone outside. The last of these Italian emperors died in 924.

The Church also had sunk into a low state. Monks had lost their earlier zeal; priests were often ignorant; many bishops thought more of their worldly possessions than of their religious duties; even the Popes were sometimes men of a very low character.

When things seemed at their worst new men and forces appeared to give Europe fresh hope for the future.

The Congregation of Cluny

In 910 a monastery was founded at Cluny, in eastern France. This new monastery set out to reform the lives of the monks and increase the power of the Pope. It followed the rule of St Benedict, with, however, one important addition. Instead of the monasteries being independent of one another, they were all to be under the head of the parent monastery, the Abbot of Cluny. In this way more discipline was introduced into those monasteries which formed the 'Congregation of Cluny.'

The Church was still in a bad state, however. Further reforms came from the new Saxon kings of Germany.

The Saxon Kings of Germany

Germany had split up into a number of duchies, and

EUROPE IN THE AGE OF OTTO THE GREAT, A.D. 962

Charlemagne's descendants had died out. The German nobles began to elect their own kings. In 919 they chose Henry the Fowler, Duke of Saxony. We have seen how Henry checked the Magyars and how his son, Otto I or the Great (936-973), defeated them at the River Lech in 955. Otto then established border-settlements, or marks, to keep back the Magyars and another hated foe, the Slavs. One of these, called the East Mark, came in time to be known as

Austria. Inside Germany Otto enforced his royal power over the turbulent dukes. His most important action, however, was his restoration of the Roman Empire.

Otto the Great, Holy Roman Emperor

Otto desired to put down the power of the great bishops and to reform the German Church. He also wished to extend his power into Italy, where some of his rebellious barons were obtaining help. He therefore invaded Italy to bring Pope and nobles under his control.

RING SEAL OF OTTO THE GREAT
The inscription reads '*Oddo Rex.*'

Like Charlemagne 150 years before, he crowned himself King of Italy with the iron crown of the Lombards. On his second visit to Italy in 962 he followed Charlemagne's example in a far more important respect; he was crowned Roman Emperor by the Pope.

Otto's coronation in 962 was an event of great importance. We have seen how in the century following Charlemagne's death the emperors had gradually lost their power until finally the title had died out altogether. Otto had now revived it and, furthermore, had definitely linked it with the German Kingdom. Henceforth the Holy Roman Emperor, as he came to be called, was always the King of Germany. This was very different from the position in Charlemagne's time. The close connexion henceforth between Germany and Italy helps us to understand why these two countries never became strong and united in the Middle Ages. The kings of Germany neglected their own country to attend to affairs in Italy; but in Italy, where Popes and nobles opposed them, they were quite unable to enforce their authority.

A New Line of Kings in France

In France as well as in Germany the descendants of

Charlemagne had grown steadily weaker. One line of dukes had for long been more powerful than the kings themselves. This line, known later as the House of Capet, possessed the important town of Paris, an island-city on the River Seine.

In 987 the last Carolingian king of France died. He had been nicknamed 'the Good-for-Nothing.' The French nobles elected Hugh Capet to be their next King. This made very little difference to France at the time, as the nobles continued to act very much as they had done before. But as the centuries passed, the election of 987 was seen to be an event of great importance. In time the Capetian descendants of Hugh were able to make France into a powerful monarchy, with Paris as its capital. The Capetian family ruled in France right down to the great French Revolution of 1789, though its two later branches, which were not in the direct line of descent, were known as the Valois and the Bourbons

Gains and Losses in England

While the Saxon kings in Germany and the Capetians in France were seizing power, the descendants of King Alfred in England were still engaged with the Danes.

One good fact had resulted from the Danish invasions: the other English kingdoms besides Wessex had disappeared in the disorders of the ninth century. This was an important step towards uniting the whole country under one king. Alfred's descendants were at first strong rulers and were able to reconquer the Danelaw. They named the reconquered shires after important towns; hence the many counties in the Midlands with names like Derbyshire (from the town of Derby) or Northamptonshire (from the town of Northampton).

The reign of King Edgar (959–975) was the happiest period in tenth-century England. Edgar was a strong and just king, and his adviser, Dunstan, a wise and holy Churchman. Dunstan had been Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey

of Glastonbury; Edgar made him Archbishop of Canterbury and his chief minister. Dunstan reformed the lives of the clergy and improved their education. He also persuaded Danes and Saxons to live more peacefully together and summoned many of the former to the king's Witan. The Danes were of course related to the Saxons in race and this made the fusion of the two races easier. Dunstan was the first of many great churchmen who acted as royal ministers during the Middle Ages.

Edgar's reign was soon followed by disaster. Ethelred the Unready, or Redeless (*i.e.*, lacking in sound advice), undid the good work of many previous reigns. During his rule (978—1016) the defences of the country were neglected, and fresh bands of Danes began to invade England. Ethelred tried to buy them off with the money obtained from a tax called Danegeld. The greedy Danes took it and went away, but of course only came back for more. In despair Ethelred, who had just concluded a truce, massacred all the Danes he could lay hands upon (St Brice's Day, 1002). The Danish King, whose sister had been among the slain, invaded England, and Ethelred fled to Normandy.

England Part of the Danish Empire

From 1016 to 1042 England was under Danish kings. The greatest of these was Canute (1017–1035), whose empire also included Denmark and Norway. Canute was a strong and good ruler, who employed English and Danes alike as his ministers and encouraged the two races to look upon themselves as part of the same nation. Under him trade increased and towns prospered. Canute was a great friend of the Church. He treated the clergy with respect, and founded churches and monasteries. He even made a pilgrimage to Rome where, the chronicler tells us, he "made large offerings of gold and silver and other valuables to St Peter, Prince of the Apostles."

Canute's two sons died young, and the Danish kings of

England came to an end. The Witan elected Edward, the son of Ethelred the Unready, as the next king.

Edward the Confessor

Edward was more Norman than English; his mother was Norman, and he himself had spent most of his life in Normandy. There he had become very devoted to the Church. It has been said with truth that he was more fitted to become a Norman monk than an English king.

Edward was a good man, but a most unsuitable king for those troublous times. He tried to reform the lives of the clergy, and built a large and magnificent church, after the manner of the Norman churches, just outside London. This was the first Westminster Abbey; the present building (the scene of royal coronations in England) is of a later date, though on the same site. Edward was named the Confessor (*i.e.*, priest), and after his death he was made a saint by the Pope.

Edward's rule, however, offended Englishmen. He brought over Normans to fill important places in Church and State and to help him in his religious work. There is no doubt that the Normans were more advanced than most Englishmen at that time; but they were regarded as foreigners occupying positions that really belonged to Englishmen, and so their presence was opposed. The leaders of the English party were Godwin, Earl of Wessex, and, after his death, his son, Harold. The latter made himself so powerful that when Edward died, without any direct heirs, the Witan elected him as the next king of England.

Harold, the Last of the Saxons

Harold was the last of the Saxon kings of England. He became king in January, 1066, and by October of the same year he lay killed in battle at Hastings. The events of this fateful year had far-reaching results upon the history of England and of Europe.

Harold found himself threatened from two directions; in the north by Harold Hardrada, the King of Norway, and in the south by Duke William of Normandy. Hardrada came like the Vikings of old—to win what he could by the sword. William, however, put forward definite claims to the throne. He was the cousin of Edward the Confessor, and

A Scene from the Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry is a strip of coarse linen cloth about 230 feet long by 20 feet wide. It is said to have been embroidered by the wife of William the Conqueror, Matilda, and her maids. It shows, in seventy-two scenes, various events in the history of the Norman Conquest. The above scene shows the attack of the Norman cavalry on the English shield wall at Hastings. The original tapestry is still preserved at Bayeux, in Normandy

thus nearer in blood to the English royal family than Harold. He said that Edward, some years before, had promised him the English throne. He had also made Harold swear on some holy relics to support his claim, when the English earl had been shipwrecked off the coast of Normandy. The English Church, he maintained, was in need of reform, and he obtained the Pope's blessing for his expedition to England.

William's claims do not seem very good to us now. Even though his claim by descent was better than Harold's, there was at least one other person, a young boy, with a better claim than William. The English crown could only be bestowed by the Witan (who had bestowed it upon Harold), and the reigning king could not promise it away. It is also doubtful whether Harold's oath was fully binding, seeing

that it had been forced upon him. One fact was obvious; whatever William's claims, he would only win England by force of arms.

The Norman duke spent the summer of 1066 preparing for an invasion. He built a fleet and collected a force of about 12,000 men. An old French chronicler tells us his methods:

> To those who wished he promised lands if he should conquer England. To many he promised other rewards, good pay and rich gifts. From all sides he summoned soldiers who would serve him.

GATEWAY OF BATTLE ABBEY

Battle Abbey was erected by William on the site of the Battle of Hastings as a thank-offering for his victory. The gateway shown in the illustration was put up much later, probably in the fifteenth century.

For several weeks William's forces lay ready, waiting for favourable winds to carry them across the Channel. On the other side was Harold with a fleet and an army made up of his housecarls (or bodyguard), thegns (or great landowners), and part of the fyrd (or Anglo-Saxon army of peasants). Then a great piece of bad luck befell Harold. The Viking chief, Hardrada, landed in the north. Harold had to march from the south coast to Yorkshire, where he defeated Hardrada at Stamford Bridge (Sept. 29, 1066). Three days later William landed unopposed at Pevensey. Had he sailed earlier, when he had wanted, he would have been met by Harold's army and fleet, and then later (if he had been successful against Harold) *he*, and not Harold, would have had to face the Vikings in the north. As it was Harold had defeated Hardrada, and had thereby weakened his own forces.

Harold came south again and, with as many men as he could gather, gave battle just outside Hastings (Oct. 14). The English forces took up their stand upon a hill and awaited the Norman attack. The Normans were superior in two ways: they fought on horseback and were supported by archers. The end of the day saw Harold slain by an arrow, and his housecarls selling their lives dearly round him.

William, the First of the Normans

William had defeated his most dangerous rival, but he was not yet King of England. His next objective was London. This he approached in a roundabout way, laying waste the countryside as he went. He crossed the Thames at Wallingford, and marched upon London from the north. The citizens submitted, the Witan elected him king, and he was crowned on Christmas Day, 1066, in Edward the Confessor's new church at Westminster.

After the next few years William's power was supreme throughout England. In 1069 the northern counties, which had revolted, were laid waste with such cruelty that seventeen years later, when *Domesday Book* was written, many villages were still completely uninhabited. In 1071 the last English resistance in the Fenland, under Hereward the Wake, was overcome. As William conquered, so he confiscated the lands of the Saxons, and gave them to his Norman followers. Not since the time of the Romans had England been so united under a strong ruler.

The Dark Ages over

The century between the coronation of Otto the Great (962) and the Norman Conquest (1066) may be regarded as the close of the Dark Ages. In Germany the crown was settled upon the Saxon kings and their descendants; and with it went, almost as a right, the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. France, under the Capetians, and England under the Normans, had obtained royal houses which, with

their later branches, were to prove permanent and were to make their respective countries strong and united. The reform of the Church had lifted it from the depths of the tenth century, and it was now the most powerful institution in Europe. The barbarian invasions which had helped to produce feudalism were now completely over. Very soon, moreover, the tide of invasion, which for centuries had been from east to west, was to be reversed by the Crusades and wars against Slavs and Saracens. The Middle Ages proper, as distinct from the Dark Ages which mark their threshold, have begun.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Give an account of the work of Otto the Great. How did his Holy Roman Empire differ from the Empire of Charlemagne?
2. Describe briefly the work of any three men who helped to bring the Dark Ages to an end.
3. What do you associate with the following Abbeys: Cluny, Glastonbury, Westminster, Battle?
4. Why did William of Normandy claim the English throne? Do you think his claims were good ones?
5. Give the main outline of events during the year 1066.

PART III
THE STRUCTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

CHAPTER VII
FEUDALISM

How Feudalism grew up

FEUDALISM was the system of society in the Middle Ages, just as at the present day we speak of capitalism, socialism, and communism. The feudal system was many-sided. It was not merely a way by which the king obtained soldiers; it was also a way of governing the country, of administering justice, and of carrying on agriculture. Thus the medieval village or manor, with its humble tenants, was as much a part of the feudal system as the proud duke or count with his vast estates.

Feudalism had grown up in the Dark Ages, especially during the ninth and tenth centuries. The invasions of the Vikings and others had made life very unsafe. The king and his government had usually been too weak and too far away to offer much protection. Consequently the weaker subjects had turned for help to their stronger neighbours, and in this way the latter had obtained control over the lands and lives of the former. Yet the great landowners themselves were still the subjects of the king and owed him their allegiance.

Thus had grown up the feudal pyramid, with the king at the top and the weaker classes at the bottom.

The Feudal Pyramid

(1) *The Tenants.* The feudal system was based upon the holding of land (Latin *feudum* means a fief or fee, *i.e.*, an

estate held in return for military service). All land was looked upon as belonging to the king, who himself, according to some writers, held it from God.

An old French saying concerning the feudal system ran: "*Nulle terre sans seigneur*," *i.e.*, no land without its lord. The king, however, could not look after the whole of his land. He therefore kept some (called his demesne), and made over the rest to his more powerful subjects. These were known as tenants-in-chief and included men like dukes, counts, and barons, together with the leaders of the Church like bishops and abbots. The tenants-in-chief then often acted like the king himself, retaining part of their land and letting out the rest to sub-tenants or knights. Sub-tenants with large holdings might carry the process still further. Finally, the single manor was reached. Here the lord kept his demesne and let out the rest to his tenants—the freemen and serfs at the base of the pyramid. In this way there grew up a system of society based upon the holding of land.

An account of the lands held by the abbot of Biddlesdon in the thirteenth century gives us an idea of these feudal relationships. It contains several entries like the following:

> Again, the said abbot holds a half hide of land and a virgate of Alice, daughter of Robert de Hastings, and she holds of Sir John son of Alan, and he holds of the King in chief, and the said abbot renders to the said Alice 30s. a year.[1]

(2) *Rights and Duties.* If we liken the various classes of tenants to the different layers of stones that go to make up a pyramid, we can regard the rights and duties attached to each holding of land as the cement or mortar. This binds the stonework together and forms a bond between the topmost layer and the lowest—between the king and the humblest serf.

Under the feudal system the possession of land always carried with it certain rights and duties. The holder of a fief had to render 'homage' to his lord by kneeling in front of

[1] Bland, Brown, and Tawney, *Select Documents on English Economic History* (Bell).

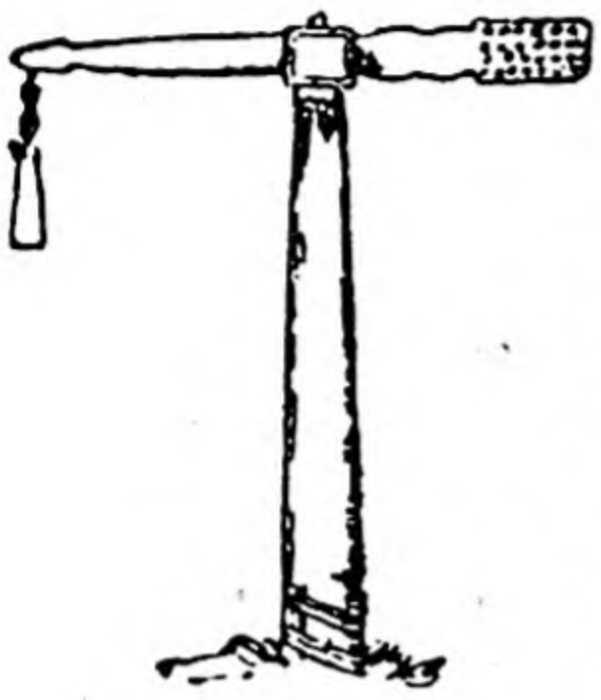
him, with hands together, and swearing to become his man (Latin *homo* = man). The tenants-in-chief had to provide the king with so many soldiers, usually for forty days' service during each year. Some of these soldiers might be raised by letting out part of the land to sub-tenants, and so on. Tenants also had to provide a ransom in the event of their lord's capture, pay part of the cost when his eldest son was knighted, and provide a dowry when his eldest daughter was married. Such payments were known as 'aids.' A further payment, called a 'relief,' was when the son of a vassal or tenant succeeded to his father's lands. Vassals were also pledged to attend their lord's court and help in giving advice or administering justice. In this way the king's council, or 'curia,' composed of his tenants-in-chief, grew up; in England it took the place of the old Anglo-Saxon Witan, or meeting of wise men. At the bottom of the feudal pyramid the villeins or serfs had to work so many days a week on the lord's demesne in return for their own strips of land.

The Strength and Weakness of Feudalism

The protection of a powerful lord was necessary in an age of violence, when the King's government was too weak to check invaders or punish wrongdoers. But it developed serious drawbacks as time went on. The inhabitants of a district were often completely at the mercy of their lord. If he were good, then all was well; but if not, they fared very badly indeed. The local baron, having obtained power, was usually determined to keep it even against the king himself, and the soldiers that he should have supplied to the king were often used to support rebellions. The baron's court might be used to enforce his own will and not the law or custom of the land; and the fines levied in these courts might be used to hire retainers or build castles with which to defy the king's authority still more. In Germany the great dukes were able to prevent their king and emperor from becoming too powerful, and at the end of the Middle Ages

Germany was less united than it had been in the time of Otto the Great.

After a time, when the barbarian invasions were over, another fact became apparent. The local barons, who had grown powerful because they had been able to protect the weak from the strong, often became the terror of the countryside themselves. They had taken the place of the barbarians! They fought among themselves, and often destroyed the peasant's crops, stole the merchant's goods, or plundered the townsman's dwelling. They decided disputes by battle, or combat, thinking (as many nations still do) that victory proves the victor's case to be more just than that of the vanquished.



A QUINTAIN

Used for tilting-practice. The crosspiece was made so as to swing round. If the rider did not hit the end of the crosspiece at sufficient speed, the other end, to which was often attached a sandbag, swung round and hit the rider.

Not all barons were violent and oppressive, but it must be confessed that many of them were. The Church tried to establish a 'Truce of God' by prohibiting fighting from Wednesday evening to Monday morning, every day during Lent, and on various holy days; but this was not usually observed. Gradually the idea of chivalry (from the French *cheval*, a horse) grew up. The chivalrous knight was obliged to defend the weak and defenceless against the strong, and to be honourable in all his dealings. Mock fights, known as jousts or tournaments, sometimes took the place of real warfare. All this was to the good, though it would be a mistake to think that the laws of chivalry were always obeyed. Such noble knights as Sir Lancelot and his companions of the Round Table very rarely existed in actual fact.

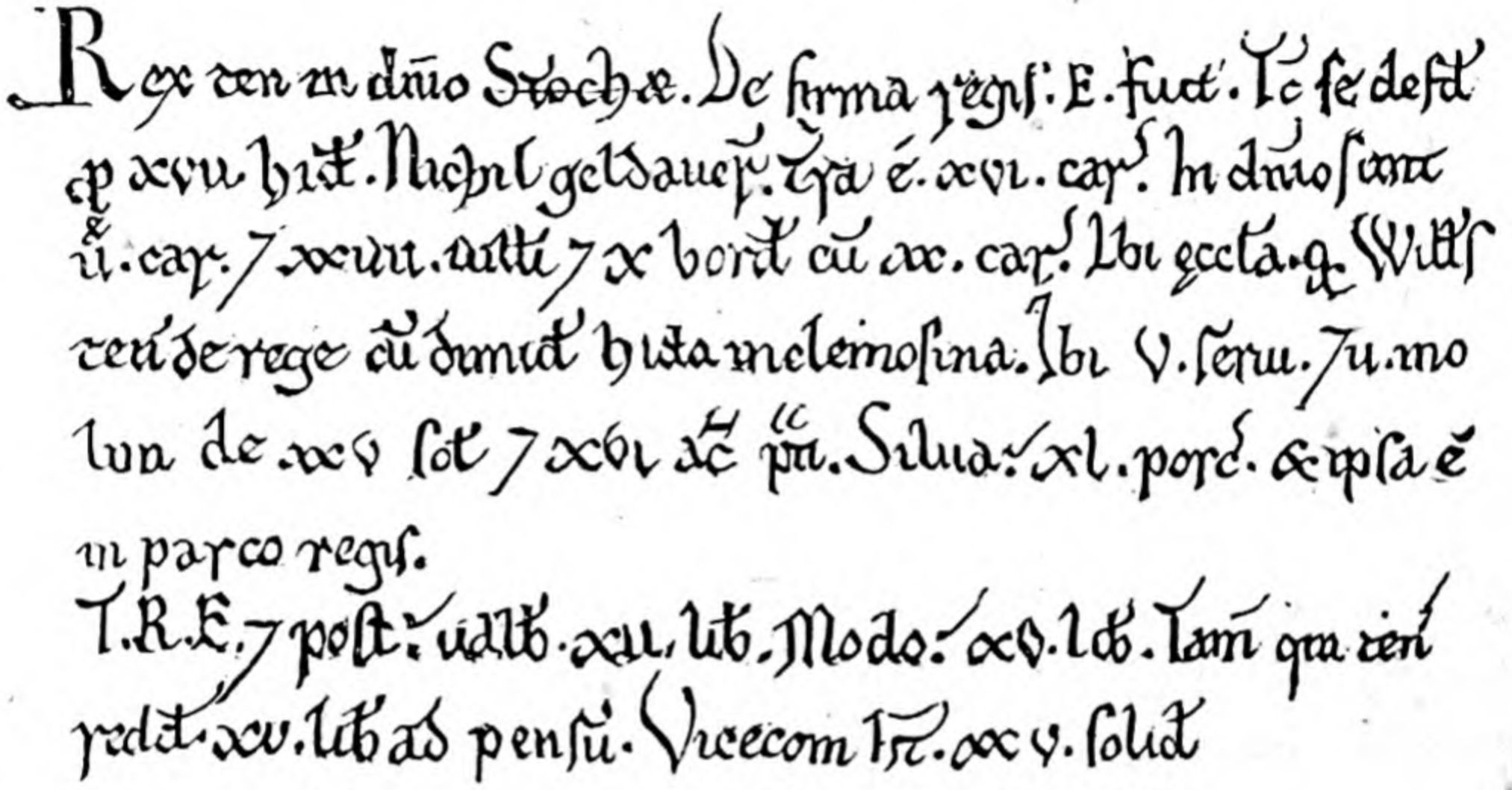
Feudalism in England

The main features of feudalism were similar in all the countries of western Europe, but the details often differed from one country or even one district to another.

It is sometimes said that William the Conqueror introduced feudalism into England. This is only partly true. There were many features of the feudal system (for instance, the manor) already in existence. What William did was to make feudalism more systematic and widespread throughout the country and to introduce certain features, such as military service, which had hardly existed under the Saxons. This was easy for William, since he had conquered a new country and had much land to give to his Norman followers. After he had subdued the north-east, for example, where the Danish settlers had retained much of their freedom, he set about feudalizing it; land was only given out in return for service of some sort.

William fully realized the weakness of the feudal system. He himself, as Duke of Normandy, was the vassal of the French King and knew how easy it was for a powerful tenant to defy his lord. He therefore tried to prevent English feudalism from becoming as dangerous to the king's power as continental feudalism was. Much of the newly conquered land he kept for himself; this included the royal forests, like the New Forest in Hampshire, where very harsh laws were enforced. He only allowed wide powers and large territories to his tenants in two parts of England, namely, in the 'palatine' counties of Durham and Cheshire (which then included most of Lancashire). This was to make the rulers of these districts strong enough to protect England from the Scots and Welsh. Elsewhere William gave out the land, bit by bit, as he conquered it, so that at the end his tenants-in-chief had lands scattered throughout many counties. This resulted in weakening them in case of rebellion. William also did away with the old English earldoms like Wessex and Northumbria, as their holders had been too powerful. But he kept the shires (now called by their French name of 'counties'), and made the old Anglo-Saxon shire-reeve, or sheriff, into an important official who collected the taxes and looked after the king's interests in each county.

In 1086 William adopted another safeguard. At a great meeting on Salisbury Plain he obliged the landowners, sub-tenants as well as tenants-in-chief, to take an oath of loyalty to himself. He hoped this would prevent the sub-tenants from following their lords in case the latter rebelled. It was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A PASSAGE FROM THE "DOMESDAY BOOK"

a good idea; but the barons still needed a strong king to keep them in check. The sad reign of the last Norman king, the weak Stephen (1135–1154), is an illustration of this.

Domesday Book

In 1086 William sent commissioners round the country to find out particulars of every man's property. He wanted to know how strong and wealthy his tenants were, and what taxes he could levy upon them. According to a Saxon chronicler at the time:

> There was not a single hide nor a rood of land, nor—it is shameful to relate that which he thought no shame to do—was there an ox, or a cow, or a pig passed by, and that was not set down on the accounts, and then all these writings were brought to him.

The information obtained was indeed very thorough; many towns and villages find their first mention in history in the pages of *Domesday Book*—so called because it came to

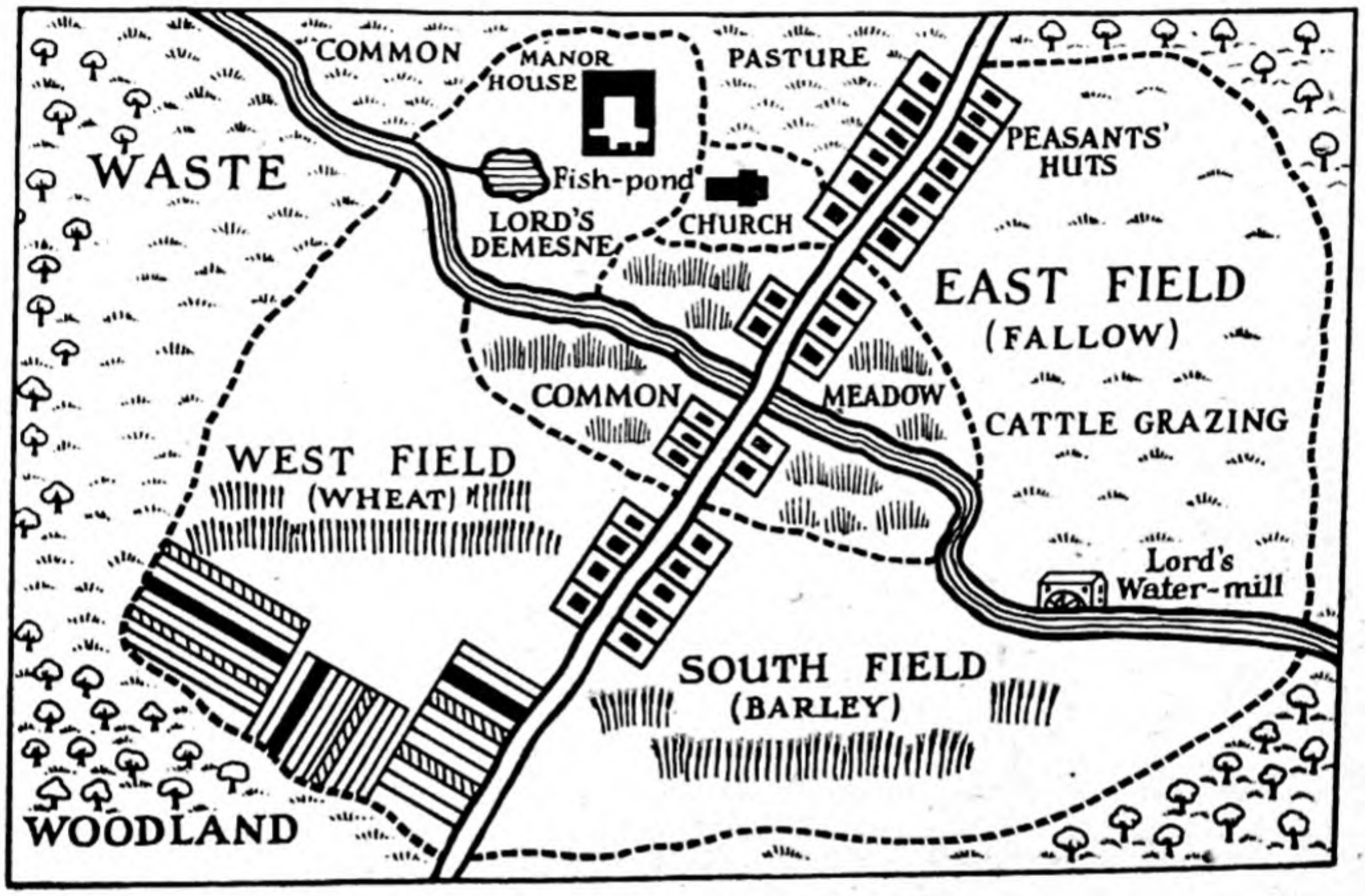
be regarded as the 'book of judgment' on all questions of taxation. *Domesday Book*, now kept in the Public Record Office in London, is the most valuable record we have of the condition of England in the eleventh century. From it we learn much about feudalism, especially about the manor which formed the basis of the whole system.

The Medieval Manor

In the Middle Ages the population was much smaller than it is nowadays. In 1066 the population of England and Wales was about one and a half millions; by 1348 (just before the Black Death killed off over one-third of the people) it had risen to about three and a half or four millions. At the census of 1931 the figures were nearly forty millions. The great majority of these forty millions earn their living in industry. commerce, or the skilled professions; but in the Middle Ages most people worked on the land. They were grouped in village communities, which in England were called manors. The manor can be regarded as the *economic* basis of feudalism, since it was the manor that produced the food consumed by all classes, from the king to the humblest serf. Manors differed in many details even in our own country, and from one country to another they differed still more. Nevertheless. their main features were the same throughout western Europe, so that if we study the arrangements upon a typical English manor, we shall obtain a good idea of how the land was worked in other countries.

There was very little trade between the manor and the outside world. In most things the manor was self-sufficing, *i.e.*, it produced its own needs. Not only did it grow its own food; it had its own craftsmen, such as the smith, the cobbler, the miller, and the carpenter, while the women (aided by the men in slack seasons) spun and wove the rough woollen cloth for the peasants' garments. Most manors had to obtain iron and salt from outside Iron was needed for small articles such as nails or parts of tools and

came mostly from the Weald in Sussex or the Forest of Dean; salt was needed for salting the meat through the winter and came from Cheshire or seaside places. Later on, trade in luxuries and trinkets grew up, but even then these were often too costly for the average peasant.



PLAN OF A MEDIEVAL MANOR

Section of West Field shows (*a*) shaded strips of a villein, (*b*) striped strips o unenclosed part of the lord's demesne.

This self-sufficiency of the manor was not altogether a good thing. It meant that a bad harvest or a plague among the beasts might reduce the manor to starvation. It also caused the people of one district to look with suspicion upon the 'foreigners' of another district. But in those days of bad roads, or none at all, a manor had to produce as much as possible of its own requirements.

Manorial Tenants

Every manor had its lord, who might be the king himself, a bishop, abbot, great noble, or one of the sub-tenants. The lord lived in the manor-house, which was usually built of stone after the Norman Conquest; but if the lord had other manors elsewhere, his stay in any one might be quite short.

There was usually a steward or bailiff to manage affairs when the lord was away.

Under the lord came the various classes of tenants: the freemen (or socmen), the villeins, the cottars (or bordars), and, in a very few cases, the slaves. The difference between

HALL OF A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY MANOR-HOUSE

Notice the brazier for the fire in the centre of the floor. At the end are shown the screens, with doors in them giving access to the kitchen and the main entrance. In the gallery over the screens sat the minstrels. (The college halls at Oxford and Cambridge are built on the same plan.)

these grades of tenants was not always very clear, as a manor in one district might differ slightly from those in another. The freemen, however, were usually free to leave the manor if they liked, and their duties to the lord were smaller and more certain than those of the other tenants. Villeins and those beneath them were in the position of serfs; they could not leave the manor without the lord's consent (and this would usually be refused), and they had heavy duties to perform. But if a villein could escape to a town for a year and a day, he became a freeman. We must remember that being tied to one particular manor was not so hard for a medieval serf as it would be for a person to-day. People

did not travel much in the Middle Ages, and in any case the serfs obtained their living from the manor, while if they went elsewhere they would have nothing to support them. The cottars and bordars had much less land than the villeins and were often obliged to work for the other tenants. The slaves we can ignore, because complete slavery soon passed away altogether.

A study of *Domesday Book* tells us that there were more freemen in eastern England, where the Danes had settled, than elsewhere. Over the whole country the villeins numbered about 38 per cent., and the cottars and bordars about 32 per cent. of the whole population. This makes the total percentage of serfs 70 per cent., or more, if we include the few slaves. We can also see the changes introduced by the Norman Conquest. The general arrangements of the manor had existed in Saxon times; but after 1066 the lord of the manor was usually a Frenchman, and many people who had been free before now sank to the position of serfs. An entry for a Bedfordshire village reads:

> There are one villein and seven bordars and a slave . . . nine thegns held this manor.

That is, where in 1086 there were nine serfs, there had been in Edward the Confessor's reign nine thegns, or free Saxon warriors.

How the Land was divided and worked

The manor was worked on what is called the open-field system, as there were no hedges or fences separating one field or one man's land from another.

The arable land, or land used for growing crops, consisted usually of three large fields. Every year one field lay fallow, the next field grew oats or barley (for brewing), and the third field grew wheat or rye (for bread). By this means every field had a rest once in three years, so that it could regain its fertility. Inside each field the land was divided

into strips, separated from one another by baulks, or grass-walks. Very often these strips measured an acre in size, being 22 yards wide and 220 yards long. The latter was reckoned a 'furrow-long,' or 'furlong.' It is easy to imagine one of these strips if you think of it as one cricket-pitch wide by ten cricket pitches long. The lord himself kept some of these strips for his own use; these, together with the land round his manor-house, were known as his demesne. The rest was divided among the tenants; a villein usually had ten strips in each field (making his holding thirty in all), a bordar or cottar very much less. To make sure that the good and bad land were equally distributed, the strips of every tenant were usually scattered about in different parts of the fields.

THRESHING

This illustration, from the *Luttrell Psalter*, shows the old method of threshing by means of flails.

In the Middle Ages clover and turnips were unknown. The only winter food for the cattle was the hay grown in the meadow-land, which the tenants shared among themselves. This hay was usually poor in quality and amount, so that most of the animals were killed off in the autumn and their meat was salted for the winter.

During the summer months cattle and sheep pastured on whatever fields were convenient. Sometimes there was pasturage on the waste surrounding the manor; the grass and weeds growing on the fallow field and the stubble on the hay and arable fields after harvest-time were often used for pasturing animals. Pigs could be turned into the woods to feed on acorns, beechmast, or roots. The woodland also provided timber for fuel and building.

To help in the working of the land every manor had its officers, whom the tenants appointed themselves. The reeve was usually the best ploughman and acted as a foreman for the villeins; the shepherd looked after the sheep; the hayward saw to the meadow-land and the hay; and the woodward guarded the rights of timber.

It is not surprising to learn that the yield from the land was very small compared with our standards. Little was known of methods of fertilizing or draining the soil, while every one had to grow the same crops as his neighbours and in the same way. The weeds from one man's strips spread to others, and disease among cattle and sheep could not be easily checked. A bushel of grain, when sown, produced about five bushels of wheat; nowadays it produces fifteen or twenty.

Rights and Duties

The lord of the manor had his duty to his overlord and to his own tenants. He had to protect the latter from all danger and see that the arrangements on the manor worked smoothly. In his manorial court he dealt with such matters as sharing out the strips, settling disputes about land or produce, transferring ownership of land, and fining tenants who let their cattle stray on to other people's land. In his decisions he was bound by the custom of the manor, for, in the Middle Ages, especially in the country districts, custom often took the place of law. Even a harsh lord of the manor would hesitate to upset arrangements that had existed for many generations.

The duties of tenants to their lord included working upon the demesne land and giving him part of their produce. A freeman was not always exempt from such service, though usually his duties were small and definite in amount. A villein, however, could be called upon to work two or three days a week for his lord, and in addition to such 'week-work,' had to perform extra labour, called 'boon-work,' at

busy seasons like harvest-time. This was the rent that the villein paid for the use of his land; money-rents such as we have nowadays were rare at the beginning of the Middle Ages. The cottars and bordars with less land had to perform less work for their lord, and spent much of their time working as hired labourers. Villeins and other serfs had also to pay fines to their lord upon certain occasions, such as the marriage of a villein's daughter or the succession of a son on the death of his father. All tenants were expected to use the lord's mill to grind their corn. Out of their produce they had also to pay a tenth, or a 'tithe,' to support the village-priest and his church.

It was a hard life that the medieval peasant led. His house was poorly built of timber or timber and mud, with no windows or chimneys. Inside the house there were very few comforts and no luxuries. Food was scarce and lacking in variety. Bread, milk, cheese, beer, eggs, and honey were the main articles, even salted meat being often scarce. The hours of work were long, and life was very much the same from one day to another, apart from the holy days and festivals which in time brought their games and sports on the village-green. But life on the manor had its good side as well as its bad. A tenant who performed his duties to his lord was not usually deprived of his land. He had often to face the danger of plague and famine; but he was safe from one of the ills of modern times, namely, unemployment and the loss of one's livelihood.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Explain briefly what you understand by the "feudal pyramid."

2. Give examples of the different kinds of service for which land was held under the feudal system.

3. In what important ways does the life of a modern agricultural labourer differ from that of a medieval villein?

4. Explain the origin of the following words: homage,

Domesday Book, feudalism, chivalry, furlong, sheriff. What do you think the word 'villein' really means?

5. Try to find from the foregoing chapter as many English surnames as you can connected with occupations upon the medieval manor, *e.g.*, Smith. Can you suggest others of a similar nature not mentioned in this chapter?

6. Read Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, XXI, 13, and Tennyson's *Sir Galahad* for descriptions of an ideal knight. For a description of a tournament turn to Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Chapter XII.

CHAPTER VIII

THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

The Eastern and Western Churches

We have already seen how the Christian religion spread throughout the Roman Empire after its recognition by the Emperor Constantine, and how the Bishops of Rome, or the Popes, were able to make themselves the supreme rulers of the Church in western Europe.

In eastern Europe things pursued a different course. Even in the time of the Roman Empire the east had been very different from the west; it was the centre of many early civilizations, and it used the Greek instead of the Latin language. After A.D. 476 the two drifted still farther apart. The monks of the east followed the rule of a monk called St Basil, while in the west the rule of St Benedict came to be most widely adopted. Differences over other matters such as the wording of the Nicene Creed, the use of images and pictures in churches (which the east at one time forbade), and the marriage of the clergy (which the east allowed) caused the two to separate still more. The real cause of difference, however, was that the Emperor at Constantinople kept the eastern Church well under his control and made the Bishop or Patriarch of Constantinople his servant. The Bishop of Rome refused to sink into this position. During the barbarian invasions the Popes had often to act as rulers and protectors of their flock, and they did not see why a distant emperor who was unable to afford protection should have any authority over them. They also thought it wrong that a political ruler like a king or emperor should settle questions of religion and have power over the clergy. In 800, when the Pope crowned Charlemagne, the indepen-

dence of the Pope was still further shown. In 1054 the Pope sent messengers to Constantinople to demand the obedience of the eastern Church. It was refused, and the messengers pronounced a solemn curse against the eastern Christians, sending them "to the eternal society of the Devil and his angels."

This was the final break. Henceforth there were two Christian Churches in Europe—the Greek or Orthodox Church, with its headquarters at Constantinople, and the Roman or the Catholic Church, with its headquarters at Rome. The dividing line was in the Balkan Peninsula, each Church being supreme in its own area. Thus countries like Greece, Bulgaria, and Russia belonged to the Orthodox Church. West of the Balkans the Roman Church alone existed; hence its name 'Catholic,' which means 'universal.'

How the Church was governed

A medieval picture shows the three main classes of men: the knight who fought, the villein who worked, and the priest who prayed.

The parish priest was the most important person in the daily life of the Church. He baptized, married, and buried the people of his parish, heard their confessions, visited them when they were sick, and once at least every week, held the service of Mass in the parish church. He mixed freely with the common people. Indeed, he was often one of them, and in Norman times was little different from the villeins. But he was excused from manual work, being supported by the tithes and other contributions of his parishioners, and was usually better educated than the rest of the tenants. Quite often, however, especially in early times, he knew little more than just enough Latin to say the services in the church, without always fully understanding what they meant.

A number of parishes were grouped together to form a diocese, which was ruled over by a bishop. Thus the Bishop

of Winchester ruled over the diocese of Winchester. The bishop's church was the centre of the diocese; it was called the cathedral, from the Latin word *cathedra*, meaning 'seat' or 'throne.' The bishop was usually far too busy to attend to the cathedral church—its upkeep, the holding of services, the collecting of revenues from its lands, and so on. This was left in the hands of a dean, assisted by a number of canons Dean and canons formed the 'chapter' of the cathedral and met in the chapter-house.

A BISHOP ORDAINING A PRIEST

From an English manuscript of the twelfth century. The bishop wears a mitre and holds in his left hand the pastoral staff, or crosier. His right hand is extended in blessing over the priest's head.

In the same way as a group of parishes formed a diocese, a number of dioceses formed a province. The province was under the charge of an archbishop. In England there were two provinces, Canterbury and York, each under its archbishop; but the Archbishop of Canterbury was regarded as head of the Church in England. He was known as the primate, or first bishop "of all England," and it was his right to place the crown on the king's head at the coronation ceremony.

The whole of the western or catholic Church was under the Bishop of Rome or Pope. In the early centuries disputed questions had often been settled by a Council composed of archbishops, bishops, and Christian rulers. The Council of Nicæa, which had been presided over by the Emperor Constantine and which had drawn up the Nicene Creed, is a good example of these early Church Councils. But in time the Pope became so powerful that, although he might seek the advice of those round him. he ruled on his own authority

without summoning special Councils. He was 'Christ's Vicar,' or representative on earth, and his 'bulls' (from the Latin *bulla*, meaning a 'seal') had the force of law. In course of time the Pope came to possess many lands in central Italy, until in the end the states of the Church stretched from coast to coast. The right of choosing a new Pope came eventually to rest with the board or College of Cardinals—important churchmen in Italy and elsewhere who had themselves received their red cardinal's hat from the hands of the Pope.

YOUNG MONKS RECEIVING THE TONSURE

The tonsure, or head-shave, was a distinguishing mark of all who were officially connected with the medieval church. It is said that the circle of unshorn hair was supposed to represent Christ's crown of thorns.

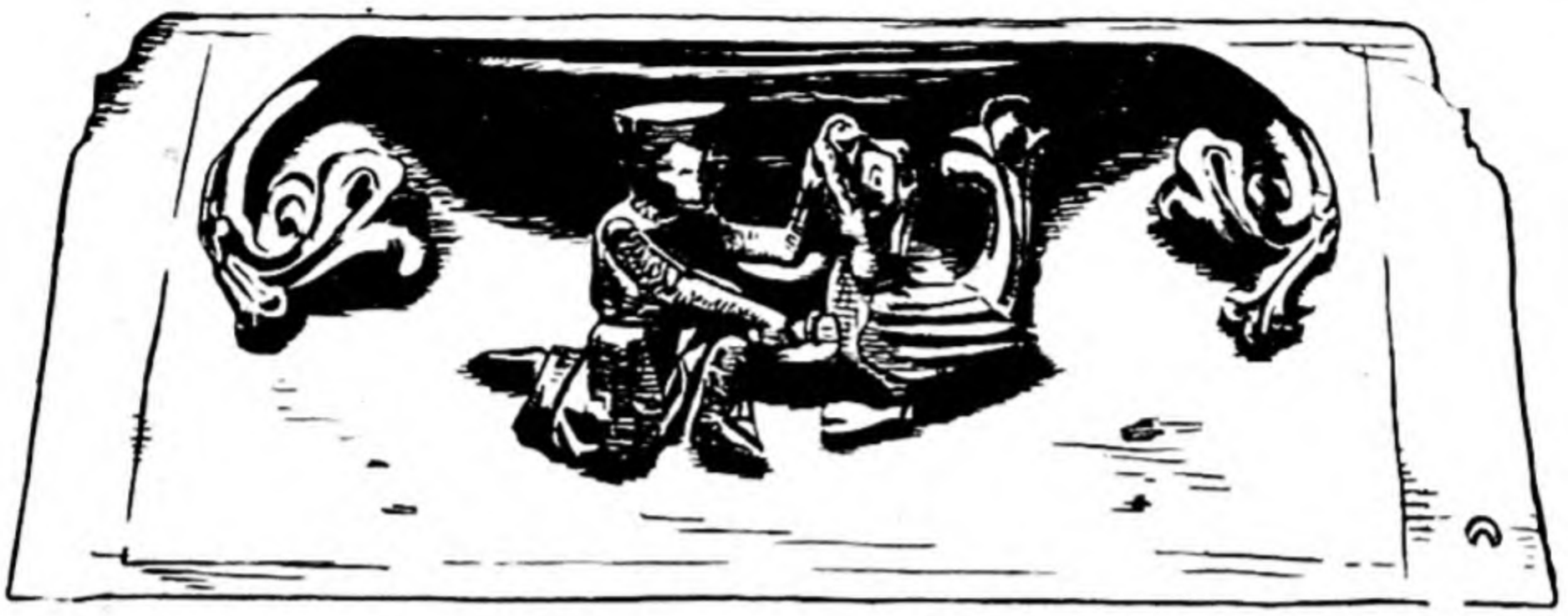
The Monks

1. *Benedictines.* In addition to the ordinary clergy who lived and mixed with the people of the outside world, there were also many monks and nuns living apart from the world and according to the rules of their order. Some of the monks were priests in holy orders, but many monks and, of course, all nuns were just ordinary lay people who felt that the outside world with its violence and sin was too great a temptation for them.

In the early centuries of the Church some men had lived by themselves as hermits. These hermits had often attracted others. In this way bands of holy men came to live together,

and the need for drawing up rules for their common life was recognized.

The most famous set of monastic rules in the west was the Rule of St Benedict, drawn up in the year 529. St Benedict had himself been a hermit near Rome, had attracted many



MISERICORD, OR MISERERE

This was a hinged seat often placed in churches which, when tipped up, was just broad enough at the edge to support a person standing during long services. If the person dozed or leaned heavily on the edge, the seat would probably swing down with a startling clatter.

From Exeter Cathedral

disciples, and had become Abbot of the monastery at Monte Cassino in Italy. His rule was drawn up in the first place for his own monks; but it proved so suitable in the way it combined strictness with moderation that for long it remained the only rule in the west, and later rules were generally based upon it.

A person wishing to become a Benedictine monk had to live in the monastery for a year as a 'novice.' At the end of the year he made his final choice, and if he chose to become a monk, he had to remain one for the rest of his life. He took three very important vows: the vow of obedience to the abbot, of complete personal poverty, and of chastity. After that the monk began his life of strict discipline and regular routine. Eight services were held every twenty-four hours in the monastery church. Two of these were held together just after midnight, and the monks had to get up from their beds for the purpose. They must often have been very cold and sleepy. William the Conqueror's Archbishop,

Lanfranc, ordered a monk to be sent round to flash a lantern in the faces of any monks who were dropping off to sleep; other monks had to see no one had slipped back to the dormitory or was dozing in another part of the church. Altogether about three and a half hours each day were spent in worship in the church.

The monks spent much of their other time in private prayer and study, or in doing housework in the monastery or manual work in the fields. St Benedict had written:

> Idleness is an enemy of the soul. Because this is so, the brethren ought to be occupied at specified times in manual labour, and at other times in holy reading.

Meal-times were occasions for listening to readings from the Bible or other holy writings:

> There ought always to be reading when the brethren are at table. The greatest silence shall be kept, so that no whispering nor noise save the voice of the reader be heard there.

During the Dark Ages the monks and their monasteries suffered terribly at the hands of the Danes and others, and many monks lost their high ideals and departed from their rule. The Abbey of Cluny was founded in the tenth century to introduce stricter discipline once more into the lives of the Benedictines (see Chapter VI). This revival did much good, but after another two centuries further reforms were found to be necessary.

2. *Cistercians.* In 1098 a band of monks, dissatisfied with the lax way in which many monks were living, founded a new monastery at Cîteaux, a desolate spot in the east of France. This was the beginning of a new order of monks, the Cistercians. Their aim was to return to the original strictness and simplicity of St Benedict's Rule, and so they built their monasteries in remote places where they would be free from the temptations of town-life and would have to support themselves entirely by their own work. In consequence the Cistercians became skilful farmers and were noted especially

for their sheep-farming. The movement spread very rapidly, and thirty years after the foundation of Cîteaux the first Cistercian monastery in England was established at Waverley, in Surrey. In time over seventy Cistercian monasteries were founded in England and Wales including such famous abbeys as Fountains and Tintern.

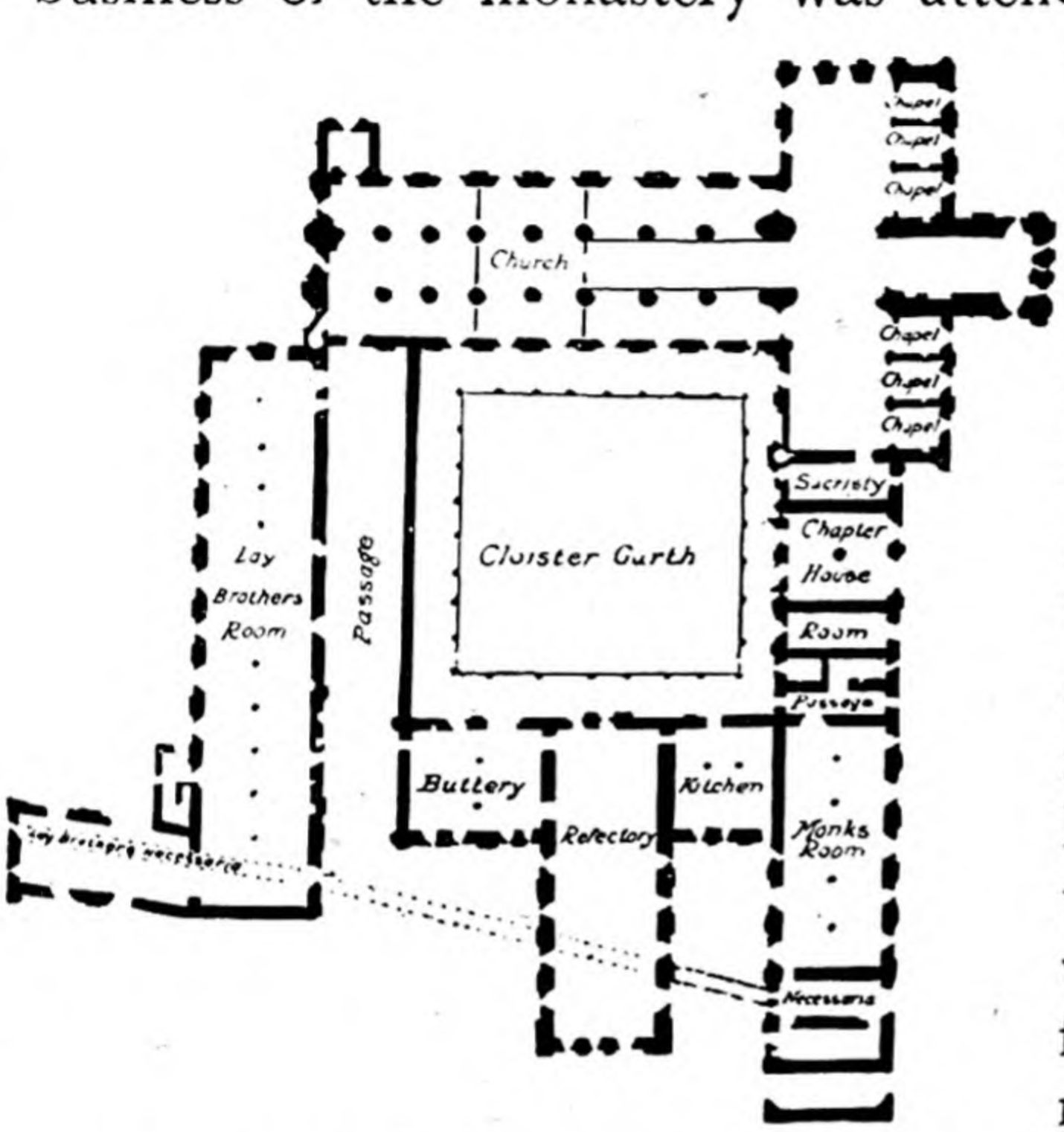
The most famous of all Cistercian monks—indeed, the most famous of all monks in the Middle Ages—was St Bernard of Clairvaux. Bernard was of noble birth, but while still a young man, determined to forego the pleasures of the outside world. He entered Cîteaux with thirty companions and after a few years, left it to found another monastery at Clairvaux (1115). Till his death in 1153 Bernard ruled Clairvaux as its abbot, and became the most famous man in all Christendom. His holiness and eloquence were so great that he often exercised more power than Popes, kings, and emperors. He put down heresy, or wrong belief; he decided on one occasion between two rival candidates for the Papacy; he advised rulers and rebuked them if they neglected the word of God; he preached the Second Crusade with such fire that the two greatest rulers of the time, the King of France and the Holy Roman Emperor, took the cross. Yet with all his power, Bernard remained at heart the humble servant of God.

Monastic Buildings

A monastery consisted of a large group of buildings of various sorts, while the lands round it formed a huge estate.

We can regard the monastery church as the chief building. Here the many services were held, and the monks, in their love of God, erected some of the finest churches in Christendom. South of the church were usually placed the cloisters—covered passage-ways in the shape of a square with a plot of grass in the middle. Here they would be sheltered from the north and would catch the sun's rays from the south. The monks had need of warm cloisters, as

they spent much of their time there, walking and meditating, or perhaps sitting and copying manuscripts or writing chronicles. Surrounding the outside of the cloisters were usually placed the other buildings. In the chapter-house the business of the monastery was attended to and offenders against the rules were punished; it was so called because every meeting was supposed to begin with the reading of a chapter from the monastic rule. Other buildings were the dormitory, where the monks slept, the kitchens, the refectory, where meals were eaten, the infirmary, where sick monks were looked after, and the guest-house, where visitors were lodged. Some monasteries had an almonry near their gate where alms or gifts were distributed to the poor.



PLAN OF KIRKSTALL ABBEY, YORKSHIRE
(The building in the bottom left-hand corner of the plan is the guest-house.)

The remains of many monasteries exist in England to give a good idea of what a monastery was like; or, better still, some, as at Chester and Gloucester, have been preserved and are now used as cathedral churches.

The Work of the Monks

There is no doubt that the monks did much valuable work in an age of violence and insecurity. They helped the poor, gave shelter to travellers and pilgrims, and sometimes educated the young. They were skilful farmers and great

builders. By preserving manuscripts and copying them out (often with wonderful 'illuminated' letters and margins), as well as writing chronicles of their own, they kept alight the torch of learning. Their monasteries were havens of peace for the gentle and scholarly. Some of the earlier

A Scriptorium of the Fifteenth Century

monks had been great missionaries, while the best of the later monks kept alive in the hearts of men the love of God and His works.

In all these ways the monks were a great advance on the early hermits, who had tried to live entirely alone. Even so, we cannot help feeling they would have done better to have mixed more with their fellow-creatures and, like Christ, to have tried to save the world instead of escaping from it. It was to remedy this defect that the orders of friars were founded.

The Friars

The friars, or 'brothers' (Latin *frater* means a 'brother'), were like the monks in many ways, but with two important

points of difference. They did not shut themselves up away from the world, but went out into it to do their work. They were also not supposed to have any possessions at all, either for themselves as individuals or for the body of friars as a whole. This was more extreme than the monks who had been allowed to hold property for their monastery or order, though not for themselves individually. There were two main orders of friars, the Franciscans and the Dominicans, called after their founders, St Francis and St Dominic.

ST FRANCIS BLESSING THE BIRDS
From a painting by the Italian artist Giotto.

St Francis was born in the Italian town of Assisi. His father was a prosperous cloth-merchant, and for long it seemed as if Francis would follow the usual life of young men in his position. He dressed splendidly, bore arms, and made merry with his numerous friends. Then a great change came over him, and he saw the emptiness of worldly joys and possessions. He resolved to follow the advice of Christ:

> "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and come and follow me."

And so, to the annoyance of his father, he renounced his family and all his wealth, and went forth to follow Christ. He was wedded, he said, to Lady Poverty, more beautiful

than all the ladies of this world. St Francis devoted himself to helping the poor and the sick, especially the lepers common in Europe at that time. Like Christ he went among the poor and lowly and often had nowhere to lay his head. He loved not only men, but all God's creation; the sun, wind, and fire were his brothers, the moon, water, and earth his sisters.

At first he was treated with scorn and ridicule, but after he had collected twelve companions, he set off for Rome to interview the great Pope, Innocent III, and obtain his sanction for a new order. This was given (1210), and henceforth the Franciscans became a recognized part of the Catholic Church. They were so humble that they were often called Friars Minor; sometimes from the colour of their garments they were referred to as Grey Friars.

St Francis lived for another sixteen years, leading the strict life he had set himself. He even preached a sermon before the Sultan in Egypt in an endeavour to convert him, and then went as a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre in Palestine. At length, in 1226, worn out by his hard life, he died. "Welcome, Sister Death!" he exclaimed when he knew his end was near.

St Dominic was a learned Spanish priest who was sent to the south of France to help in the conversion of heretics. These were people who denied some of the doctrines of the Catholic Church. Some of these French heretics taught that the Pope and his clergy were sinful because they had become too rich and full of worldly cares; others even taught that priests were unnecessary and that the Bible alone was sufficient for salvation. One of the most powerful Popes of the Middle Ages, Innocent III (1198–1216), had tried to suppress these heresies by preaching a Crusade against them, and by encouraging rulers to bring the heretics to trial. In the course of the thirteenth century the dreaded Inquisition was established. St Dominic saw that the best way to convert the heretics was not only to beat them in

argument, but to lead a life of such holiness that they could find no fault with it. For many years he worked hard to achieve this end, collecting round him a band of faithful followers. At length, in 1218, after some hesitation, the Pope allowed St Dominic to found a new order, the Dominicans. They were also known as the Order of Preachers, from their work in preaching the Catholic faith, and Black Friars, from the colour of their robes.

The Work and Influence of the Friars

The orders of friars in time reached four and included sections for women. They spread throughout western Europe, but as they grew they lost some of their original fervour. At first their houses or friaries were humble dwellings of wattle and mud, and we read that at Shrewsbury, when the townsmen gave stone walls to the Franciscans, the head friar had them pulled down. Later, however, things changed. It was arranged that the Pope should hold any property given to the friars, and by this means the friars were able to make use of gifts and live in bigger buildings without breaking their vows of absolute poverty. St Francis would certainly have condemned this arrangement.

The two chief orders kept largely to their separate spheres of work—the Dominicans preaching the true faith, the Franciscans doing more practical work among the poor and sick. In many places they came into conflict with the parish priests, whose influence over their flocks lessened whenever the newcomers appeared. The Popes encouraged the friars, however, as, like the monks, they formed a kind of *international* body of preachers ever ready to extend the Pope's power.

Many friars, even among the Franciscans, were learned men. The greatest authority in the Middle Ages on the Catholic faith was a Dominican, Thomas Aquinas, who left behind him eighteen large volumes dealing with religion.

An English Dominican, Roger Bacon, invented the magnifying-glass and experimented with gunpowder. He also prophesied the invention of flying-machines "wherein a man sits revolving some engine by which artificial wings are made to beat the air like a flying bird." A learned Franciscan, Duns Scotus (or 'the Scot'), is responsible for our modern word 'dunce,' as his followers were called by their opponents 'dunsers.'

The thirteenth century, in which all the above men lived, was the greatest period of the friars. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries they decayed, and some became little better than professional rogues and vagabonds. We find all kinds of writers attacking them. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, written about 1390 (see Chapter XVI), contains a description of a friar:

> He knew the tavernes wel in al the toun,
> And everich hostiler and tappestere
> Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
> For unto swich a worthy man as he
> Accorded nat, as by his facultee,
> To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.

In modern English this would read:

> He knew the taverns well in every town,
> And every hosteler and tapster
> Better than a leper or a beggar;
> For unto such a worthy man as he
> It was not in accordance with his ability
> To have acquaintance with sick lepers.

To such depths had some of the friars fallen 150 years after the death of their founders!

The Power of the Church

The Catholic Church was the most powerful institution in the Middle Ages. Men and women, anxious to save their souls, left it much of their wealth. It became the biggest landowner in Europe, and its rulers were usually great

feudal lords. It had its own law, known as canon law, and its own courts for trying cases concerning priests as well as for all cases dealing with wills or marriage.

The priests were in many ways a class apart. Broadly speaking, they were the only educated class. They were not allowed to marry. Only they were allowed to read the Bible; in fact the sole translation of the Bible used in the Middle Ages was a Latin version known as the Vulgate, and this could not be understood by the uneducated masses. The services of the priests were of the utmost importance, as the Church taught that without them there was no salvation. This made such punishments as excommunication (where the offender was denied all Christian services and fellowship) and interdict (where a whole district or even country was denied most of the Church services) very terrifying.

Popes claimed to be greater than kings and emperors. They had charge of the souls of men, ordinary rulers merely of their bodies. They even claimed the power of deposing rulers and appointing new ones. Two of the greatest champions of these claims were Pope Gregory VII (or Hildebrand), who lived at the time of William the Conqueror, and Innocent III, who lived during the reign of King John. Gregory's beliefs were summed up in the words:

> The Roman pontiff alone is properly called universal. He alone may depose bishops and restore them to office. He is the only person whose feet are kissed by all princes. He may depose emperors. He may be judged by no one. He may absolve from their allegiance the subjects of the wicked.

Innocent III expressed the same ideas in a different way:

> As the moon receives its light from the sun, and is inferior to the sun, so do kings receive all their glory and dignity from the Holy See.

Whatever we may think of these claims, we must recognize that the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages did an enormous amount of good. It saved much of the learning

of the ancient world. It was the greatest single force in helping the poor, providing for the sick and educating the young. And when Europe was breaking into separate kingdoms and separate feudal divisions, it was the Church which tried to curb the violence of the unruly barons and which gave to men of all countries a feeling that they belonged to the wider unit of Christendom—that they were all, rich and poor, strong and weak, English, French, or German, the children of God through Christ.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What were the chief points of (*a*) similarity, (*b*) difference, between the lives of a parish priest, a monk, and a friar?

2. In what important ways do the churches of modern England differ from the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages?

3. Write notes on the meaning of the following words: Papal Bull, cathedral, Catholic, chapter-house friar, dunce.

4. What side of a monk's life would have appealed to you most of all? Give your reasons.

5. What have you learnt about Pope Innocent III from the foregoing chapter?

6. Write a few lines about St Benedict, St Bernard, St Francis, Roger Bacon.

7. Study the plan of Kirkstall Abbey on p. 116, and say what the separate buildings were used for.

CHAPTER IX

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

The Empire in the Middle Ages

We have already learnt much of the early history of the Holy Roman Empire—how the great Frankish King, Charlemagne, had revived in 800 the title of 'emperor,' which had died out in the west in 476, how his successors had seen their power diminish in the ninth and tenth centuries until the title had once more ceased to exist, and how in 962 the German King, Otto I, had once again revived it when he was crowned by the Pope at Rome.

From Otto's time onward the title of 'emperor' continued with practically no break. It was henceforth bound up with the title of 'king of Germany.' The holder of one title was always the holder of the other, although in strict theory the king of Germany could not call himself emperor until he had been crowned by the Pope. This union between the kingdom of Germany and the Roman Empire (called 'Holy' after the twelfth century) was of the utmost importance for Germany and the rest of Europe. It meant that the nobles of Germany, in choosing their king, also chose the emperor of western Christendom. It meant, also, as we shall see later, that the kings of Germany were weakened by their possession of the prouder but vaguer title of 'Holy Roman Emperor.'

Otto I had belonged to the Saxon line of kings in Germany. The Saxons were succeeded in the eleventh century by the Salians; the greatest of these was the Emperor Henry IV (1056–1106), remembered for his struggle with the ambitious Pope Gregory VII, or Hildebrand. In the twelfth century another family, the Hohenstaufen, became kings of Germany

and Holy Roman Emperors. The best known of these were Frederick Barbarossa, or 'Red-beard' (1152–1190), and Frederick II (1212–1250), called 'the Wonder of the World' on account of his cleverness. After a short interval the Hohenstaufen were succeeded by the Hapsburgs. Rudolph, the first Hapsburg, was elected in 1273. The original home of the Hapsburgs was in Switzerland, where the ruins of their castle can still be seen. They later obtained possession of Austria, while Switzerland became independent of the Empire. We thus think of them as an Austrian family. Before the end of the Middle Ages the Hapsburgs had come to be regarded as the family that should always be elected to the office of emperor. They held that position till 1806, when Napoleon brought the Holy Roman Empire to an end. Even after then they ruled in Austria as emperors till the end of the Great War in 1918.

From the very beginning the kings of Germany had been elected by the great nobles. The kingship never became hereditary, as it did in England and France. For long it was not clear which nobles had the power of election. In 1356 this was definitely settled by a document known as the 'Golden Bull.' There were to be seven electors: the Archbishops of Trier (or Treves), Mainz, and Cologne, the King of Bohemia, the Count Palatine of the Rhine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Margrave of Brandenburg. We may notice here that in 1648 the ruler of Bavaria, and in 1692 the ruler of Hańover, were added to the number of electors. In 1714 the Elector of Hanover became King of England as George I.

The Empire in Theory and Practice

People in the Middle Ages thought of the Church as one; they would have been horrified at the idea of having the large number of different kinds of churches that exist at the present day. One God only ruled in Heaven; His rule on earth should be vested in one Church. The head of that Church was the Pope the representative of God on earth.

He looked after men's souls and showed them the way to salvation.

But men have bodies to be looked after as well as souls. This was not a fitting task for the Pope, as it involved too much attention to the everyday affairs of the world. God needed therefore another representative —some one who would govern men's lives, who would put down their enemies, who would defend the Church from heretics within and infidels without. This earthly representative of God was the Holy Roman Emperor. While the Pope was entrusted with the keys of Heaven and Hell, the emperor was entrusted with the sword for the defence of Christendom. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa wrote in one of his letters:

THE SPIRITUAL AND THE TEMPORAL POWERS

A tenth-century mosaic in the Church of St John, Rome. It represents Christ giving to St Peter the Keys of Heaven, and to Constantine the banner symbolic of earthly dominion.

> On earth God has placed no more than two powers, and as there is in Heaven but one God, so is there here one Pope and one emperor.

The emperor was thus lord of the world in earthly matters, and superior to kings, princes, and nobles.

This was his position in theory; in practice it was far otherwise. Firstly there were two emperors in Christendom: the eastern emperor at Constantinople, and the Holy

Roman Emperor in the west. But the eastern emperor and the eastern church were so far away and so little heard of that they did not matter much to people in western Europe. Even in the west, however, the emperor's position was very different from that of an overlord to kings and princes. The kings of England, France, and elsewhere were willing to acknowledge the emperor as the first ruler in Christendom; but they utterly refused to allow him to interfere in their kingdoms. In practice the emperor had no more power in England or France than the kings of those countries had in the Empire.

Even inside his own Empire the emperor had at times little power, and as the Middle Ages progressed his power became less. This was due to two reasons. The bishops and nobles who had the power of electing him were in such a strong position that they were able to prevent the persons they chose from becoming too powerful. The emperors were also often engaged in struggles with the Popes to determine who was the stronger. As a result they spent much of their time waging war in Italy, and while they were away neglecting Germany, the Pope was often able to persuade the German bishops and nobles to revolt from their master.

Emperors and Popes

The early emperors had often been better men than the Popes, and, in fact, had done much to reform the Papacy. But after a time, as the Church grew stronger, it looked with distrust upon any interference from kings and emperors. If it was true that the emperor was God's representative in earthly affairs, it was also true that the Pope was His representative in spiritual affairs. As man's soul was more important than his body, it was argued that the Pope was more important than the emperor. This conclusion the emperor denied. The result was that the Middle Ages witnessed a long struggle, lasting several centuries, between Popes and emperors to decide who was to be supreme.

The first round of this struggle took place during the time of our Norman kings. The Emperor was Henry IV (1056–1106). The Pope was the famous Benedictine monk, Hildebrand, who, on becoming Pope, took the title of Gregory VII (1073–1085). The new Pope was a staunch champion of the Papal power. The Pope, he said, was like the sun; the Emperor like the moon. Both were the creations of God; but the sun was more powerful than the moon, and the pale light of the moon was really borrowed from the sun.

Within a few years of Gregory's succession, Pope and Emperor were quarrelling over the question of the investiture of bishops and abbots, *i.e.*, the right of conferring upon them the signs of their office. A bishop's signs were the ring and the staff; the ring to show he was wedded to the Church, and the staff to show his position of a shepherd over his flock. Hitherto kings and emperors had often conferred these signs; but Gregory now forbade anyone but a Churchman to perform this. How else, he argued, could the Church control the kind of men who were made bishops? It was only reasonable that the Church should appoint its own officials. But there was something to be said on the other side. Bishops and abbots, as well as being Church officials, were also great feudal landowners, owing loyalty and service to their king or emperor. Inside the Empire, for instance, the Church held about one-third of all the land. If the emperor had no control over the choice of bishops and other Churchmen, he would have no control over these lands.

Thus both Emperor and Pope had a certain amount of right on their side, and neither would give way. Gregory excommunicated Henry and deposed him, and the German nobles revolted from their master. Henry crossed the Alps to crave forgiveness from the Pope. The interview took place in January, 1077, at the castle of Canossa in North Italy. Gregory, an infirm old man, kept his warrior-opponent, who was barefoot and clad in the hair-shirt of a penitent, outside

the castle in the snow for three days. At length the Emperor was admitted to the Pope's presence and forgiven. The events at Canossa showed the mighty power of the Papacy.

The struggle over the right of investiture continued, however, and was not settled till 1122, when both Henry and Gregory had long been in the grave. In that year an agreement was reached at the German town of Worms, by which the Church was to appoint bishops and abbots in the future and invest them with the signs of their spiritual office; but the emperor, on their appointment, had the right of conferring their lands upon them. This arrangement was similar to that between Anselm and Henry I of England, reached fifteen years earlier (see Chapter XIII). It was a compromise which did not always work well; the Church had gained its point in theory, but the emperor could in practice still veto any appointment.

HENRY IV, COUNTESS MATILDA, AND GREGORY VII

From a twelfth-century manuscript in the Vatican Library at Rome. The Countess Matilda of Tuscany (in whose lands Canossa was situated) and the Abbot of Cluny used their influence over Gregory VII to obtain forgiveness for Henry IV.

The investiture dispute was only the first round of a struggle that lasted several centuries. One hundred years after the time of Henry IV the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa tried to unite Italy and Germany. He invaded north Italy, but was defeated by the cities of Lombardy which valued their independence and were supported by the Pope. Soon after Barbarossa's death on the Third Crusade (1190), the Papacy reached the height of its power under Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). Innocent's power was felt

throughout the whole of Christendom. He forced the French King to obey him over a question of divorce; he forced our own King John to surrender his kingdom to the Pope and pay a yearly tribute for receiving it back; he preached the Fourth Crusade and launched an attack upon the heretics in the south of France. Finally, he made and unmade emperors. After Innocent's death the Emperor Frederick II made a valiant attempt to crush the Papal power, but he was unsuccessful. The Papacy was too strong to be vanquished.

The Results of the Struggle

The emperors lost more than their struggle against the Papacy; they lost also most of their authority in Germany. They had neglected their German dominions in order to wage war in Italy, and the German dukes, counts, archbishops, and citizens had taken advantage of their absence to make themselves almost independent of the Emperor's authority. In this they had been supported by the Popes. The struggle also had important results upon Italy. The Popes became strong rulers of a dominion stretching across central Italy from coast to coast and including the city of Rome. But they were unable to unite all Italy under their own control, and the existence of the Papal States prevented anyone else from doing so.

Thus it was largely because the struggle resulted in *weakening* the emperors and *strengthening* the Popes that Germany and Italy remained disunited throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, and were not made into strong kingdoms till the latter part of the nineteenth century.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What was the theory of the Holy Roman Emperor's position? How did his actual position differ from the theory?

2. Write notes upon: Canossa, Innocent III, Hapsburgs, Golden Bull.

3. What was the investiture struggle about? Can you see why the agreement reached at Worms might not always work well?

4. Explain briefly why the Holy Roman Empire had bad results for Germany.

5. It was once said that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire. Take each of the three words in turn, and see whether you agree with this remark.

CHAPTER X

THE CRUSADES

How the Crusades began

The Crusades, or 'Wars of the Cross,' were the struggles waged by Christendom against the Mohammedan infidels of the east. From some points of view they include the wars fought against the Moors in Spain and the missionary campaigns of the Germans against the heathen Slavs across their eastern border; we have also seen how Innocent III preached a Crusade against the heretics in the south of France. But when we speak of the Crusades we think instantly of Palestine and the east, of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and of Richard the Lion Heart before the walls of Acre. It is right that we should think thus, for it was the state of affairs in the east that produced the Crusades, and it was to win back the Holy Land that the bulk of the Crusades were fought.

The Crusades developed out of the pilgrimages that were popular in the Middle Ages. The shrine of a saint, like St Thomas of Canterbury, attracted thousands of pilgrims anxious to show their respect for the memory of a holy man and to win whatever grace they might obtain from their journey. The greatest pilgrimage of all was to the Holy Land—to visit in person the scene of our Lord's life. and in particular to visit the Holy Sepulchre where Christ was supposed to be buried. Pilgrims often carried a bag, or scrip, for their bread, and a long staff with a water-bottle hanging from it. When they returned they sometimes brought back some sign of their pilgrimage. Thus pilgrims to the Holy Land brought back some dust, which they thought would act as a charm, and also a palm-branch, which was placed over the altar of their church.

The Arabs had conquered the Holy Land in 637, soon after the death of Mohammed; but they had not ill-treated the Christian pilgrims and were, in fact, more lenient towards those outside their faith than were the Christians

PILGRIMS TO JERUSALEM PAYING TOLL ON LANDING AT JOPPA
From a manuscript of the fifteenth century.

themselves. Soon after the year 1050 the position in the east underwent a great change.

A new race from central Asia, the Turks, swept over the Arab world in the eastern Mediterranean, and in 1076 they captured Jerusalem. The Turks became Mohammedans, but they had little sympathy with the civilization of the Arabs, and they began to treat Christian pilgrims with great cruelty. Stories reached western Europe that made men long to recover the Holy Land from these barbarous infidels.

Other factors helped to produce the Crusades. The eastern Emperor was defeated by the Turks in a great battle

in Armenia, and Asia Minor and even Constantinople were threatened; he appealed to the west for help. Commerce between east and west was made unsafe, and the Italian ports which made profits from this trade saw their position becoming worse. In western Europe the Dark Ages were over, and the feudal knights, especially of Normandy and other parts of France, welcomed a chance of war and conquest in foreign lands. The Church also saw its opportunity. A large-scale expedition of Christendom against Islam would increase the authority of the Pope and the Church, and would enable the Church to use the religious fervour of the masses and the warlike enthusiasm of the knights for its own ends. The Church offered special privileges to Crusaders. A chronicler of the Fourth Crusade thus describes the Pope's promises:

> All who should take the cross and do God's service in the host for one year would be delivered from all the sins which they had committed and of which they had made confession. Because this pardon was so great, the hearts of men were much moved, and many took the cross for the greatness of the pardon.

The First Crusade (1095–1099)

In 1095 Pope Urban II summoned a council of clergy and nobles to meet at Clermont, in France. Here he preached the First Crusade:

> Wrench the land from the accursed race, and subdue it yourselves. Thus shall you spoil your foes of their wealth and return home victorious, or, purpled with your own blood, receive an everlasting reward.

The people responded with a mighty shout, "God wills it!" Men pressed forward to receive the Crusader's badge, the cross of red cloth.

The enthusiasm was so great that a preacher named Peter the Hermit soon collected a vast horde of men, women, and

children. Without waiting for the main body and with little thought for the organization of such a journey, they set off for the east. Many perished on the way; the rest—a disorderly mob—reached Constantinople, where the Emperor hurried them across to Asia Minor to get rid of them. There most of them were slaughtered by the Turks.

Meanwhile the real army was gathering in the west under famous knights like Raymond of Toulouse, Godfrey of

WOODEN EFFIGY OF ROBERT OF NORMANDY

From Robert's tomb in Gloucester Cathedral. The crossed legs of the figure denote a crusader.

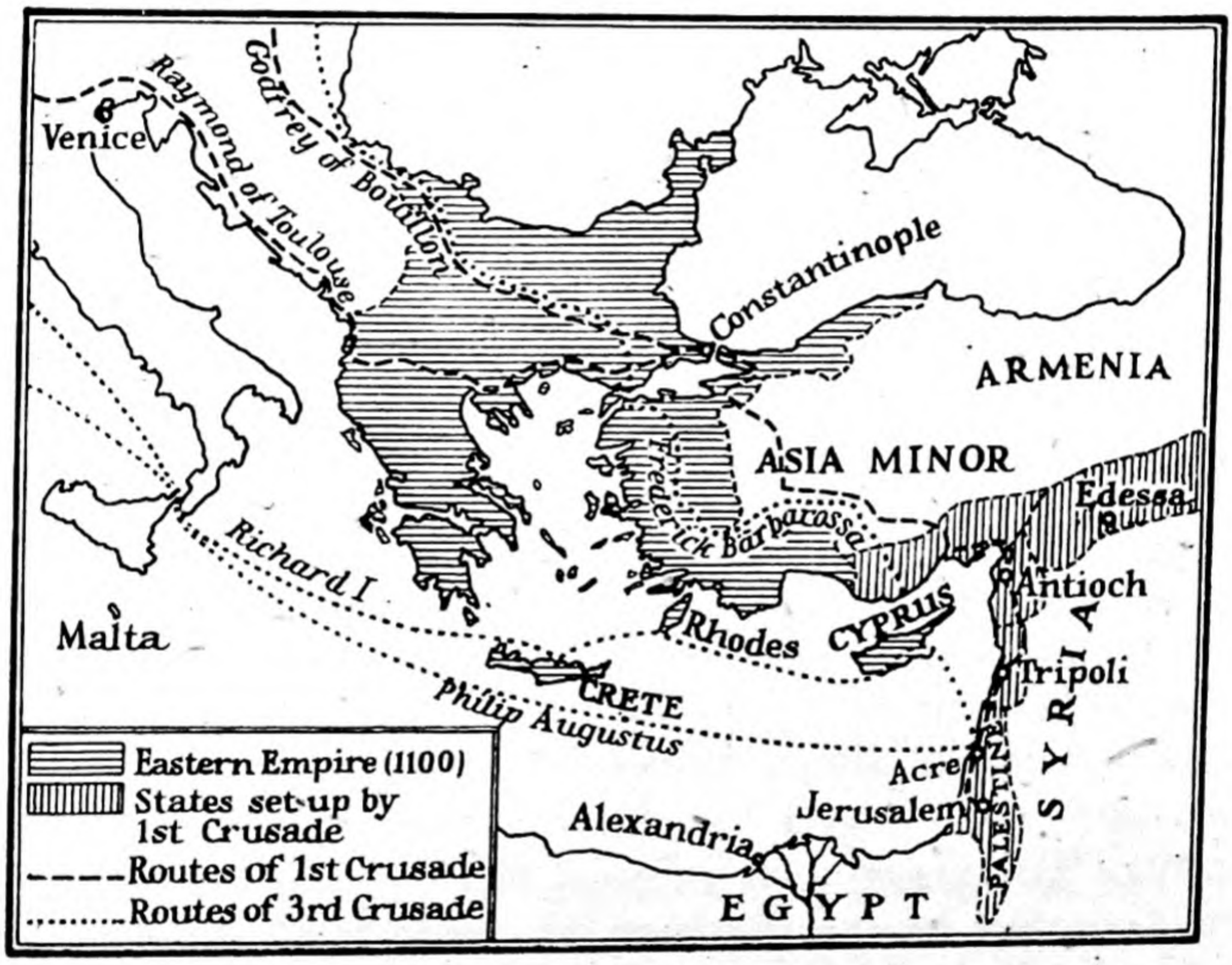
Bouillon, and Robert of Normandy, the eldest son of William the Conqueror. By different routes the various sections reached Constantinople. Then they crossed into Asia Minor, defeated the Turks, and reached Antioch. After a siege of seven months the city fell (1098). The Crusaders soon found themselves besieged by a relieving army of Turks, and were in great distress. They were given fresh courage by the discovery in Antioch of a lance, said to be the Holy Lance that had pierced the side of Christ on the Cross. They sallied forth and defeated the Turks.

After the capture of Antioch the Crusaders pressed on to their main goal, Jerusalem. In 1099 this fell into their hands, and the Turkish defenders were slain with great slaughter and bloodshed—very different indeed from the gospel of peace that Christ had preached in this spot one thousand years before. In time the whole coast of Syria was conquered, and a number of Christian states were established. The main one was the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem; the others belonged to various leaders who had often quarrelled

among themselves during the Crusade and wanted a share of the spoils. In all these states many feudal customs from the west were introduced.

The Crusading Orders

It is common to divide the Crusades into separate numbers, from the First Crusade, in 1095, to the Ninth Crusade,



nearly 200 years later. But this is misleading if we do not remember that there were continual small streams of pilgrims and helpers going out to the east, and that much fighting went on between the main Crusades.

Two crusading orders were founded in order to help the Christian state in Syria. These orders combined the life of a monk with the life of a knight. Their members took the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and added a fourth, which was to protect pilgrims to the Holy Land and fight the infidels. These two orders were

known as the Knights of St John and the Knights of the Temple.

The Knights of St John were established in 1113. They grew out of a brotherhood formed nearly a century before to look after sick pilgrims in a hospital at Jerusalem. Hence they are sometimes called Hospitallers. They did much valuable work in the twelfth century in defending the Holy Land, and when they were eventually driven forth by the Turks they settled in various places in the eastern Mediterranean in an attempt to stem the advance of the infidels. In the time of Napoleon (1800) their headquarters were in the island of Malta. The capital of Malta, Valetta, is named after the Chief Hospitaller, La Valette, who in 1565 defeated a great Turkish attempt to capture the island. As a crusading order they have long died out, but they still survive in some countries. In England the St John Ambulance Corps, with its badge of the Maltese Cross, reminds us of the medieval Hospitallers, although these modern ambulance-men have nothing to do with crusading or the Catholic Church.

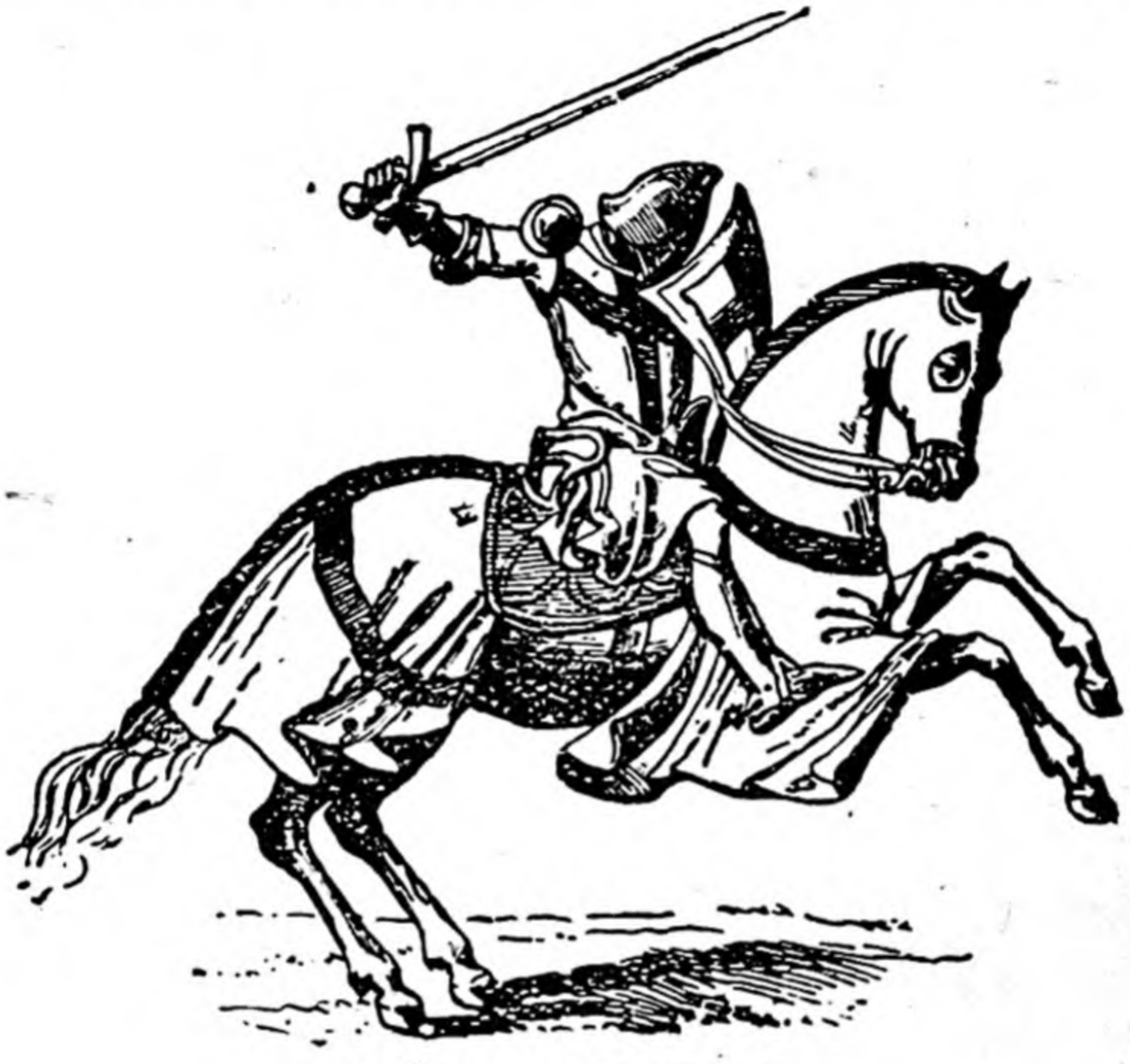
SEAL OF THE HOSPITALLERS

Notice the barbed Maltese Cross (the sign of the Hospitallers) above the patient's head.

The Knights of the Temple, or Templars, were founded in 1128, partly through the efforts of St Bernard of Clairvaux. They obtained their name from their headquarters, a palace, known as Solomon's Temple, which stood on the site of the original temple. They were prominent in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in helping the Crusaders, and attracted many members. Their headquarters in England were situated where now stand two of the London inns of court (the Inner Temple and the Middle Temple), which are famous for the study of law. The round Temple Church near by was built about the year 1200 and is the only remaining part of the original headquarters still standing.

The Temple Church is the biggest of four round Churches in England modelled on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

After two centuries the Templars had grown so rich and powerful that they were looked upon with jealousy by rulers



A Knight Templar

and Churchmen. They were accused of heresy and brought to an end in 1312.

The Later Crusades

In 1147 the Second Crusade began. The Turks had begun to recover from their defeat in the First Crusade and had even recaptured one of the important cities that the Crusaders had taken. The preacher of the Second Crusade, St Bernard, aroused much enthusiasm, and the kings of France and Germany led a mighty host to the Holy Land. Nothing was gained, however, and thousands of Crusaders were killed.

During the next forty years things went from bad to worse for the Christians. The Turks became united under a very able leader named Saladin. Saladin was a sincere and noble

Mohammedan, leading a righteous life and at times generous towards his foes. But he was the stern enemy of the Christians and was determined to expel them from the Holy Land. City after city fell before him, and at last, in 1187,

From an illuminated manuscript of the thirteenth century. King Richard, on his return from the Holy Land, was shipwrecked off the coast of the Adriatic. Attempting to travel through Austria in disguise, he was captured by the Emperor of Austria, whom he had offended at the siege of Acre. The King regained his liberty only by paying a ransom equivalent to more than twice the annual revenues of England. According to an old story, the king's whereabouts was discovered by one of his minstrels, called Blondel, who sang outside the castle a song that he and the king had composed together.

RICHARD I IN PRISON

Jerusalem itself was taken. The fall of Jerusalem produced dismay in western Europe and led to the Third Crusade.

The Third Crusade (1189–1192) is the one best known in England, as it included our own king, Richard I, or the Lion Heart. The two other greatest monarchs of Europe also joined it: Philip Augustus of France and the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of Germany. With such leaders it seemed that the Crusaders could not fail. But the expedition met with disaster, and nothing was really achieved. In 1190 Frederick Barbarossa was drowned while trying to cross a

swollen river in Asia Minor, and many of his followers returned home. An old German legend says that Frederick Barbarossa is not dead but sleeping, and that one day he will awake and help Germany in her hour of need. The other two leaders, Philip Augustus and Richard I, had come direct to Palestine by sea, and succeeded after a hard siege in capturing Acre. But they soon quarrelled, and Philip returned to France, pleading that he was ill. Richard remained in Palestine for more than a year, but although he performed numerous feats of knightly courage and strength, he was unable to capture Jerusalem. The utmost he could do was to make a treaty with Saladin by which Christian pilgrims were allowed to visit the Holy City in safety and without paying tribute. In 1192 Richard set sail for England; his adventures can be read on p. 139.

The story of the remaining Crusades can be briefly told. The Fourth Crusade was really a disgrace to western Christendom. The Crusaders—mainly French knights—were persuaded by the Venetian merchants, whose ships were transporting them, to attack Constantinople instead of the Holy Land. Venice hoped thereby to obtain valuable colonies and increase her commerce. Constantinople—a Christian city—was sacked by the invaders in 1204; the eastern Emperor was deposed, and a new Empire set up, which lasted nearly sixty years.

In 1212 came the Children's Crusade, when thousands of children from France and Germany set out to do what armies of fully grown knights had failed to accomplish. Many perished of hunger and other hardships, or were sold into slavery; only a few ever saw their homes again.

Despite other attempts in the thirteenth century to rescue Jerusalem from the Turks, the Christians were never able to accomplish their aim. Turkish power grew, until by 1300 the Christians had lost all their remaining possessions in the east. In 1453 the Turks captured Constantinople itself, which they still possess. They remained masters of Palestine

till the Great War (1914–1918), when General Allenby succeeded in doing what Richard I and Frederick Barbarossa had been unable to achieve.

The Results of the Crusades

Although the Crusades failed in their main object, they kept the Turks well occupied for two centuries and thus weakened them. But for the Crusades, Constantinople would probably have fallen long before 1453.

The chief results of the Crusades were of an indirect nature. Many barons sold their lands or sold privileges to tenants and to towns in order to raise money for their expeditions; and of those who went, many settled in the east or else died fighting. All these facts helped to strengthen the power of the king and to undermine feudalism. Men's outlook was broadened by travel in strange countries and intercourse with foreigners. The eastern Christians of Constantinople and the Mohammedans of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt were in many ways more civilized than the inhabitants of western Europe. They were better acquainted with the learning of the ancient Greeks, while Arab scientists and philosophers were the most advanced of their time. Thus knowledge was increased. The Crusaders discovered, too, (much to their surprise, we may imagine), that the people of the east lived on a higher scale than those of the west. Their houses, palaces, churches, and mosques were grander; they used articles like silks, spices, sugar, ivory, and tapestries which were unknown in the west or else were expensive luxuries. This increased the Crusaders' respect for other nations and other religions. It also increased trade between the east and the west, as in time western Europe began to demand these articles from the east. The Italian trading-cities of Venice and Genoa grew rich as a result of the Crusades. They provided the ships for the Crusaders themselves, and they were the chief carriers of eastern goods *via* the Mediterranean Sea to western Europe.

The Crusades, in fact, touched life in the Middle Ages at all points. They showed the unity of Christendom and the power of the Church and Pope more than any other event. They gave to the feudal baron a chance of showing his bravery and devotion and of introducing feudal ideas into the east. The crusading orders combined the life of a monk with the life of a knight. Every one, from emperors and kings to peasants, outcasts, and even children, was affected. Finally, the Crusades strengthened many of the forces that eventually brought the Middle Ages to an end—the broadening of man's outlook, the growth of town-life, the development of commerce, and the power of the king over his feudal nobles.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write down briefly why (*a*) the Pope, (*b*) the eastern Emperor, (*c*) the knights, (*d*) the Italian ports favoured the Crusades.

2. What evidences in England at the present time still remind us of the medieval Crusades?

3. Which Crusade do you consider to have been (*a*) the most successful, (*b*) the least successful, (*c*) the most disgraceful? State briefly your reasons.

4. Why did the life of the crusading orders appeal especially to men in the Middle Ages?

5. Read parts of *The Talisman*, by Sir Walter Scott, for an account of Richard I's Crusade.

CHAPTER XI

TOWNS AND COMMERCE

Why Towns grew up

The Romans had been very fond of town-life and had established many towns throughout their Empire. In the Dark Ages many of these had been destroyed or had decayed, as the German tribes were fonder of agriculture and country-life than of commerce and industry and town-life. Even so, some of the most important towns had a continued existence from Roman times, and by the end of the Middle Ages their number had been increased by the addition of many hundreds more, some of them completely new and some old ones refounded.

Towns were needed for many reasons. They might be centres where industries and crafts were carried on, or convenient markets either for home or for foreign trade. Very often they combined two or more of these functions. They grew up at places which were favourable from a geographical point of view. London and Southampton were convenient ports for trade between the Continent and the south of England. Oxford (at one time known as 'Oxen-ford') grew up where the Thames was easily forded, Guild-ford where there was a gap in the North Downs. Bury St Edmund's and St Albans developed to meet the demands of the large monasteries close at hand and of the pilgrims who visited them. In a similar way Newcastle supplied the needs of the Norman castle on the Tyne. On the Continent Paris was situated on an island easily defended against attack; Venice and Genoa were convenient ports for Mediterranean trade, Hamburg and Lübeck for the North and the Baltic Seas.

Towns flourished in Europe from the year 1000 onward, and craftsmen and merchants grew rich. Yet we must remember that these towns were fewer in number and much smaller in size than modern towns. The medieval townsmen were more progressive than the peasants; but they were a minority of the population, which in the main was still agricultural.

How Towns became Free

The early history of the towns is largely an account of their struggles to free themselves from their feudal superiors. Some of the older towns of England, like London and Dover, were directly under the king and were in a special position from the beginning. Towns that grew up later were at first under a feudal lord (the king, a noble, or a monastery) who had full rights of lordship over them. This obviously was an unsatisfactory position. Men who desired to practise some craft or engage in commerce could not do so if they had to render labour-services to their lord, pay him a part of their produce, and appear before him in his court. Hence their struggle for freedom and their desire to have their rights fully set down in charters.

These charters were not granted for nothing, and the townsmen had often to pay heavily for them. Richard I and many crusading nobles raised much money for their Crusades by the sale of charters. Monasteries were usually less willing than the king and his nobles to grant privileges, and many disputes occurred between the townsmen of Bury St Edmund's and their abbot.

The chief privilege that the townsmen desired was to be free from the various services and amounts of produce that they owed to their lord; instead they wished to pay him a fixed lump sum every year which they could collect among themselves. Secondly, they wished to be free to govern themselves, to hold their own courts, appoint their own officials, and declare their own 'by-laws' or town-laws.

Thirdly, they desired the right to control their own industry and trade, to form gilds, to hold markets, and to levy tolls.

These rights were not always granted in one charter. Often a town had to struggle from one set of rights to another before it was finally satisfied. In 1200 the burgesses or townsmen of Bury St Edmund's paid a lump sum of £40 a year for their land and 4*s*. a year for every cow that was pastured. They also had their own gild merchant and their own court, or portmanmoot. But they still had to do a small amount of ploughing for the abbey, while the chief town officials were appointed by the monks and could be dismissed by them if they were not satisfactory.

A charter granted to the town of Bedford in 1237 by Henry III begins:

> The King to all greeting. Know ye that we have granted and by our present charter confirmed to our burgesses of Bedford all their liberties and customs and laws and quittances, which they had in the time of the lord, King Henry, our grandfather, specially their gild merchant with all their liberties and customs in lands and islands, in pastures and all other their appurtenances, so that no one who is not in that gild do any trafficking with them in city or borough or town or soke.[1]

The charter then goes on to state that the burgesses of Bedford were to hold the same liberties as the men of Oxford, and were to accept the latter's decision in any question concerning them.

What a Medieval Town was like

Many towns in the Middle Ages would be considered by us no more than large villages. At the time of Domesday (1086) York had about 1600 houses, and Lincoln 910. Furthermore, many townsmen were engaged part of their time in agriculture, and dung-heaps might be seen piled

[1] Bland, Brown, and Tawney, *Select Documents on English Economic History.*

close to their houses, and pigs might be met searching for food in the rubbish that littered the streets.

The streets were narrow and evil-smelling, for there was no proper system of drainage or sanitation. A gutter often

Shops and Dwellings at Newcastle in the Fourteenth Century

ran down the middle of the street, which sloped gently from the sides to enable the filth to collect. The healthiest spot inside the town was usually the market-square—a large open space, with a cross in the middle. The houses were at first built mainly of wood and were thatched with straw,

and, as they were crowded together along the narrow streets, fire was a constant danger. Later the houses of the more prosperous townsmen were built of stone (or partly so) and were roofed with tiles.

The shops, like the houses, were very small compared with ours at the present day. They were grouped round the market-square, or else in streets devoted to special trades. Modern street-names like Shoe Lane or Bread Street remind us of this medieval custom. The front of the shop was protected at night by a large board, which in the daytime could be let down to form a counter. At the back of the shop the craftsmen were often at work making the goods for their customers. It was common for the shop to have a sign outside showing the kind of business it transacted. Relics of this custom survive to-day in the barber's pole and the three balls outside a pawnbroker's. The sign for an inn in the Middle Ages was a bush. This explains the modern saying, "Good wine needs no bush," *i.e.*, a good article needs no advertisement.

Many towns were protected by a wall and a moat. At Chester and York it is still possible to walk along these medieval walls and admire the huge gateways that gave admission to the city. In London such names as London Wall, Newgate, and Ludgate are reminders of the time when the city of London was walled round. Since then London has grown so large that the old city (which still retains its own separate government) is now like a small hub at the centre of a vast wheel.

The Gilds

One of the most cherished privileges of the town was the right to form gilds or associations to regulate their trade and industry. The earliest gild in a town was usually the gild merchant, which included most of the tradesmen and master-craftsmen. Its aim was to regulate trade for the benefit of buyer and seller: to see, for instance, that articles were

of the correct weight and quality, as well as to prevent outside merchants from coming in and underselling the merchant gildsmen themselves. About the year 1300 the townsmen of Newcastle-under-Lyme set forth the privileges of their gild merchant in the following words:

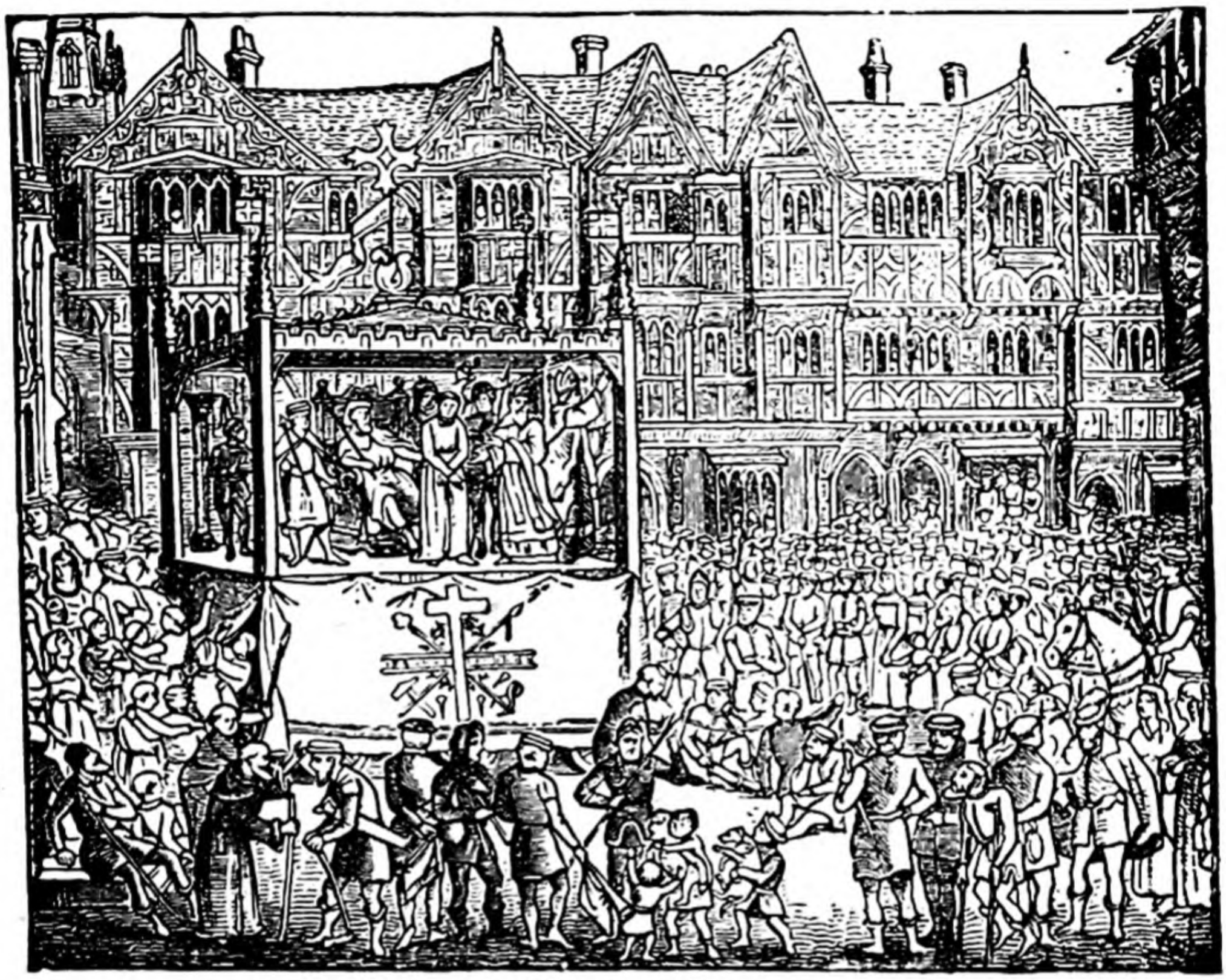
> The custom of that borough is such, by the freedom of that gild, that no one may sell or buy within the aforesaid borough any wool, except those within the aforesaid gild, save by sacks or some other great weight. . . . No one, unless he be of the liberty of that gild, can cut cloth to sell within the town, nor cut meat or fish, nor buy raw hides, nor buy wool by the fleece, save by a great weight, to wit, by stones, a sack, or half-a-sack.

The intention here obviously was to keep the retail trade of the borough in the hands of the gildsmen.

During the thirteenth century many towns grew so large that, instead of possessing one gild merchant to manage the whole of their trade and industry, they formed separate craft gilds to manage one particular craft or industry. Thus the Weavers' Gild regulated the weaving of cloth, the Carpenters' Gild regulated the carpentry of the town, and so on. In this way it was possible to keep closer watch upon the quality and quantity of goods made and exchanged. Night-work especially was forbidden, since it often led to inferior workmanship. Prices were carefully regulated with the idea of obtaining a just price that would be fair to both the buyer and the seller. Like the old gild merchants, the craft gilds looked after the markets and fairs, and tried to prevent outsiders from coming in and underselling the craftsmen.

In some ways the gilds resembled the modern trade unions, but the two are not really alike. A trade union is composed only of workmen; a gild was composed of the three grades of workers, namely, apprentices, journeymen, and master-craftsmen. Boys usually served a period of seven years' apprenticeship under their masters, with whom they often

lived. After their apprenticeship they became journeymen, or workmen employed by the day (French *journée* means 'day'). A thrifty journeyman might be able to save enough to become a master-craftsman, but before doing so he would have to make a good piece of work, called a masterpiece,



A MIRACLE PLAY

A company of players, including millers and ropemakers, is acting upon the stage the trial of Christ by Pilate. Afterwards the tailors' gild usually acted the story of the Ascension.

to show that he was skilled at his trade. The gilds thus included both masters and men, and, although the masters had more control than the journeymen, the latter usually did not mind this very much, as many of them hoped to become masters themselves later on. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, however, when it became more difficult for a journeyman to rise to the position of a master, quarrels became more frequent between masters and men. The gilds also tried to keep the trade of the town too much to themselves, and limited very strictly the number of apprentices

who could be admitted. Many gilds became rich and charged high fees. In some places they controlled the affairs of the town, and the gildhall became the centre of the town's government, as well as of its economic life.

THE BLACKSMITH

The gilds usually performed a large amount of charitable work. They looked after members if they fell ill, and provided for the widows and orphans of those who were dead. They arranged for masses to be said for the dead, and once a year (often on Corpus Christi Day) marched in procession to church to honour their patron saint. They also took part in the miracle plays, which consisted of stories from the Bible acted so as to impress them upon the minds of the people. In time each gild came to have its own special play or scene, such as *The Creation*, *The Three Kings*, or *The Last Judgment*. These and other plays were acted in Bible order in great lumbering wagons two or three stories high—the ground stage being used as a dressing-room, the second stage for the acting, and the third stage representing Heaven. These wagons were dragged in order round the town, stopping at selected places for the plays to be performed. Here

the assembled crowds received religious instruction as well as good entertainment. Noah is rebuked by his wife; Herod struts about the stage; the Devil, in a leather dress ending in claws, appears through 'hell mouth' and is fooled by the good spirits dressed in dazzling white coats. The flames of hell are produced by fire, one of the gildsmen being employed in 'keeping up the fire at hell-mouth.' We may be sure that these plays were as good fun for the actors as for the onlookers. Miracle plays were the earliest form of drama in the Middle Ages; out of them eventually grew the plays of Shakespeare and later writers.

Markets and Fairs

Markets were held every week in the open market-square. It was then that the country people brought in their corn, eggs, cheese, cattle, wool, and other produce to exchange for the cloth, leather, shoes, ploughshares, and other articles of the townsmen. In many respects, as we have seen, the countryside was self-supporting. It grew its own food and wove its own cloth, while the village carpenter, smith, and cobbler produced articles suitable for ordinary use. But if finely woven and beautifully dyed cloths were required, they had to be obtained at the market or fair; likewise with salt, carefully wrought iron goods, ginger, pepper, and other spices from the east. The gilds imposed many regulations upon these markets. Outside merchants might be excluded or forced to pay tolls. No one could trade till the trumpet or bell had sounded. Weights, measures, and quality were open to inspection.

In addition to the markets some towns held, at much longer intervals, large fairs, which lasted several days. It was then that buyers and sellers from far-distant parts came together, and rare and costly articles changed hands. Stewards purchased things in bulk for their lords—French wines and Oriental spices for the table, tapestries for the walls, perhaps luxurious carpets for the floors. The greatest

fair in England, at Stourbridge, near Cambridge, lasted three weeks. Silks, velvets, and glassware were brought from Italy; fine linen and woollen cloth from Flanders; cottons and spices from the east; iron, furs, and timber from the Baltic. Some of these fairs, like those at Novgorod, in Russia, and Leipzig, in Germany, are still held; but the modern word 'fair' is now usually applied to the amusements which in the Middle Ages formed a relief to the serious business of buying and selling.

Disputes at markets and fairs were tried on the spot, in a convenient house or booth set aside for the purpose. The court was known as the Court of Dusty Feet, or Pie Powder, from the dusty feet (French *pieds poudrés*) of the travel-stained merchants who attended it.

Trade and Commerce

Many of the merchants visiting these fairs were members of some great trading-company or other. Foreign trade was at times a dangerous occupation, involving voyages across pirate-infested seas and journeys into strange lands. To ensure greater safety and to obtain greater privileges, merchants often banded themselves into companies or leagues, paying their subscriptions and observing the rules of the company in return for the advantages they obtained.

In England the Merchants of the Staple exported the 'staple' products for which England was famous—the wool, tin, and lead that had to be shipped through certain 'staple' towns to enable the taxes to be easily collected. Wool was the most famous English export, and the king derived much money from the taxes placed upon it. It was exported mostly to the cloth-manufacturing towns of Flanders. The Lord Chancellor, who is the highest judge in the country, still sits upon the 'woolsack'—symbol of our chief medieval product—when he presides over the House of Lords. By the end of the fourteenth century -- partly with the help of Flemish weavers that Edward III encouraged to come over—

England was developing an important cloth-industry of her own.

The most powerful trading-company of all was the Hanseatic League, a union of nearly one hundred cities in northern Germany. The Hanseatic League had almost a monopoly of the trade of northern Europe. It grew

TALLY-STICKS OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

(*a*) A private tally; (*b*) an Exchequer tally. Tally-sticks, or notched sticks, were often used by unlettered people to check their payments or receipts of money.

immensely rich, lent money to kings, and had a fleet of ships to chase pirates off the seas. Its headquarters in London were known as the Steelyard, probably from the huge scales, called by that name, that were kept there. Cannon Street railway station now stands upon the site of this former German settlement. Quarrels and riots were common in the neighbourhood of the Steelyard, as the presence of foreign merchants was often resented by the English. But the Hanseatic merchants brought many benefits to England, and their goods and money were eagerly sought. Englishmen often called them 'Easterlings,' as they came from eastern Europe, and their money was known as 'Easterling,' or 'sterling,' money.

In the south of Europe trade was largely in the hands of the Italian cities, especially Venice and Genoa. Italian fleets, plying their way through the blue Mediterranean, were the connecting link between east and west, north and south. Trading-routes from India and the east converged by sea, river, and caravan upon the eastern Mediterranean at Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. Here sallow Italian merchants bargained with dark-skinned Arabs and

Persians for their spices, silks, cottons, and precious stones. Laden with their valuable cargoes, the galleys turned back and sailed into the setting sun, some through the Straits of Gibraltar to northern Europe, others back home to northern Italy, whence the goods were carried over the bleak Alpine passes and thence down the green valley of the Rhine. The city of Bruges, in Flanders, was the greatest market in the north.

It was the Italian cities that developed the art of banking, and many words of Italian origin are still used among bankers (see Chapter XVIII). In many countries finance and moneylending were in the hands of the Jews, since Christians were forbidden by the Church to lend money at interest. The Jews were often ill-treated and their goods confiscated. Their ill-treatment in England is well described by Sir Walter Scott in his novel, *Ivanhoe*. In 1290 Edward I expelled the Jews from England, and they were not allowed to return again till the time of Oliver Cromwell, 350 years later.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What were the chief privileges desired by a growing medieval town? How did it try to obtain them?

2. Describe the chief differences between the appearance of a medieval street and that of a modern street.

3. What do you think were (*a*) the good points, (*b*) the bad points, about the medieval gilds?

4. What led merchants to form trading companies in the Middle Ages? Give an account of one of these companies.

5. Explain the meaning and origin of the following words: by-law, journeyman, masterpiece, sterling, Court of Dusty Feet.

6. Describe briefly the way in which a silk shawl made in India might find its way to London in the Middle Ages. How would it come at the present day?

CHAPTER XII

LEARNING AND THE ARTS

Schools in the Middle Ages

ALTHOUGH many people in the Middle Ages could not read or write, it is a mistake to think that education was neglected. Rulers like Charlemagne, Alfred the Great, and Canute helped to establish schools in their kingdoms. Most schools were connected in some way or another with the Church. Perhaps the school was attached to a monastery or a cathedral; where these did not exist it might be held in the parish church, maybe in the porch or in the vestry. In some cases schools were connected with the chantry-bequests that people had made to provide for services to be held for their souls after death. Sometimes the gilds promoted education either for the children of their members or for the children of the town. Towards the end of the Middle Ages a few large, well-endowed schools were established in England, like Winchester College (founded by William of Wykeham in Richard II's reign) and Eton College (founded by Henry VI).

At many of these schools the conditions were much harder than nowadays. Punishments were severe, and school sometimes began at five or six o'clock in the morning. Holidays were short, and at one school the boys had to attend every school day during the holidays between eight and nine in the morning and from two to three in the afternoon to repeat what the master thought fit.

The subjects taught were somewhat different from those of the present day. At some of the less advanced schools little was taught beyond simple reading, writing, and arithmetic. 'Horn-books' were commonly used for teaching letters and simple sentences. There were very few text-

books, but one of the commonest was the Latin Psalter, or book of psalms. At many schools singing was an important subject; in fact 'song schools' for the choir-boys attached to a cathedral or church were very numerous. The better boys were often sent to a more advanced school after they had learnt to read and write. Here they were instructed in the seven arts: first in grammar, rhetoric, and logic—which meant that they were taught some Latin grammar and literature and how to speak and think clearly; then in music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy (which included a certain amount of geography). Arithmetic was handicapped by the use of the Roman numerals. It was not till the twelfth century that the Hindu-Arabic numerals began to be introduced into Europe.

Education in the Middle Ages was, of course, not compulsory, and it is impossible to estimate how many children were able to benefit from the facilities offered. Probably quite a large proportion of boys underwent some sort of schooling, especially when we remember that most of it was provided free where the parents were too poor to pay fees. As far as girls were concerned, their education, in a scholastic sense, was almost entirely neglected.

Universities in the Middle Ages

Many of the most famous universities of Europe date from the Middle Ages. They grew up gradually to meet the needs of students who wished to go beyond their studies at school. A famous lecturer might attract students from all parts of Europe; then other lecturers might settle in the same spot. In time students and lecturers found it convenient to band together in defence of their rights and privileges. In this way a *universitas*, meaning an association or body of persons, would grow up.

Probably the first university in Europe was that of Salerno, in Italy; this dated from the ninth century and was famous for the study of medicine. After the year 1100 new factors

appeared which led to the foundation of other universities. The Crusades widened men's outlook; Europe was settling down, and the study of law to regulate men's lives became important; there was a wider knowledge of Aristotle's writings, usually from Latin translations often based themselves on Arabic translations from the original Greek. In the twelfth century came the foundation of the University of Bologna, famous for the study of law, and the University of Paris, famous for the study of theology. Probably in the same century the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were founded; they were both modelled on the University of Paris, while Cambridge was soon increased by students who deserted Oxford on account of disturbances. In 1209 a writer stated that there were 3000 teachers and scholars at Oxford. It was not till later in the thirteenth century that the first colleges were established at Oxford and Cambridge.

Medieval universities attracted students from all nations. The use of Latin as the common language of learning made this possible. Often the different 'nations' organized themselves into separate bodies, and quarrels between them sometimes occurred. Disturbances also occurred between the students as a whole and the townsfolk, who often resented the appearance of these unruly strangers in their midst. But it was soon realized that the universities brought fame and custom to the town, and quarrels between 'town and gown,' although they continued, became less bitter.

Scholars entered the university much younger in those days than in our own. Fourteen or fifteen years was the commonest age. The full course of study extended over seven years, and included much the same subjects as those taught at school. After his three years on grammar, logic, and rhetoric, the undergraduate became a Bachelor of Arts —rather like an apprentice in a gild. Then four years were spent on arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, after which the Bachelor became a Master of Arts and was

qualified to become a lecturer himself. Those who were able then proceeded to more specialized studies in theology, law, or medicine. Owing to the shortage of books less reading was done than at a modern university. Truth was sought in the lecture-rooms, where knowledge was imparted orally and where students and teachers strove against one another in finely spun, but not always very profitable, arguments.

Medieval Knowledge and Beliefs

Theology, or the study of religion, was the chief occupation of scholars in the Middle Ages. It was based upon the Scriptures and the writings of the early Church Fathers, and of course it had to agree with the teachings of the Church. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who lived three centuries before Christ, was also, strange to say, regarded as one of the highest authorities upon all branches of learning. A medieval student is said to have announced his discovery of spots in the sun to a learned man. "My son," he was told, "I have read Aristotle many times, and I assure you there is nothing of the kind mentioned by him. Be certain that the spots which you have seen are in your eyes and not in the sun." Such a reverence for dead authors considerably handicapped the study of theology and other branches of learning in the Middle Ages. The greatest theologian is generally said to have been the Dominican friar, St Thomas Aquinas:

The study of science was handicapped not only by a reverence for Aristotle and other dead authors, but also by the numerous false beliefs of the time which were held by even quite learned men. Astrologers taught that the heavenly bodies influenced human beings; thus a child born under the sign of the Lion would be courageous, while one born under the Crab would not go forward well in life. It was also believed that the sun went round the earth and not *vice versa*, and America and the southern hemisphere were unknown. The early chemists, or alchemists, taught

that everything was made of the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. They also spent much time in looking for the philosopher's stone, which they said had the power of turning all metals into gold. Doctors tried to cure illnesses

THE HEREFORD MAP, 1280 A.D.

This map was drawn in about 1280, and the original, 53 inches in diameter, can be seen in Hereford Cathedral. It gives a good idea of geographical knowledge in the Middle Ages.

by bleeding their patients and giving them strange medicines composed of gold filings, boiled adders, and herbs; they were also very careful to observe the omens, such as the size of the moon and the appearance of certain planets. Men believed in strange animals like the phoenix, which, after living five hundred years, burned itself to death and then later arose revived from the ashes. In the interior of India, it was thought, lived men without mouths who were able to exist on the perfume of flowers.

Witchcraft and magic were widely believed in. Witches were said to have sold themselves to the Devil in return for the power to work magic. At night they rode on broomsticks through the air and met in lonely places. At these 'witches' sabbaths' the Devil taught his servants their devilish arts. They were taught how to change themselves into animals, how to bewitch people with the evil eye, how to destroy crops, and how to kill their enemies by making waxen images of them and sticking pins into them. Cases of sudden death were often put down to witchcraft, and thousands of harmless old men and women must have been put to death on the charge of being in league with the Devil.

In such an atmosphere science, whose discoveries depend upon the accurate observation and collection of facts, could make few advances. Nevertheless, the Middle Ages were not entirely barren. Alchemists and astrologers made many useful discoveries, though many of them were made for wrong reasons. The Dominican, Roger Bacon, invented the magnifying-glass; while gunpowder, with which he experimented, was a medieval discovery.

Literature and Music

Broadly speaking, the literature of the Middle Ages falls into two main classes: first, the works of learned men and chroniclers, written mainly in Latin; and secondly, the poetry and legends of the common people, written mainly in the native tongues.

Few people, apart from scholars, are much interested nowadays in the Latin writings of medieval theologians and philosophers. But the stories of heroic deeds and chivalry that grew up in the course of the Middle Ages are still widely known and read. Most of these stories were for long recited or sung before they were written down, and in the course of time they were added to almost beyond recognition. Thus the dim British chieftain who fought against the Anglo-Saxons and was the original King Arthur developed into a

medieval knight in plated armour. As such he presided over the famous knights of the Round Table, whose valorous exploits are known to almost every child.

It was the same with the Frankish king, Charlemagne. French literature gave him a reign of one hundred and twenty-five years and made him the champion of Christendom against the Moslems. Rather like King Arthur, he was placed at the head of a famous band of warriors so equal in bravery that they were known as the twelve peers of France. The French epic, the *Song of Roland*, relates how the best-known of these peers, Roland, was slain at the Pass of Roncesvalles while leading the rear-guard of Charlemagne's army out of Spain. In vain had Roland sounded his magic horn, for Charlemagne was fifteen leagues away. It is said that a Norman minstrel inspired the Normans with this song just before the battle of Hastings.

ROLAND AT RONCESVALLES

From a thirteenth-century window of stained glass in Chartres Cathedral. At the right Roland sounding his horn; at the left Roland endeavouring to break his sword Durendal.

In Germany a great epic grew up called the *Niebelungenlied*, or song of the Niebelungs, a mysterious people whose treasure brought ill-luck to anyone who stole it. A dauntless hero named Siegfried slew the Niebelungs and seized their treasure. At first things went well with him, but in the end his greatest enemy pierced him between the shoulders, the one spot where he could be killed. These old German stories have been made into a series of operas by a modern German musician named Wagner.

In later chapters we shall see how national literatures were still further developed by poets like Dante in Italy and Chaucer in England.

In an age of very few books and when many people could not read or write, it was natural that singing and recitation were commoner than at the present day. Minstrels travelled from castle to castle singing their songs of love and knightly deeds to the accompaniment of harp or lute. Of these minstrels the best-known are the troubadours of southern France. A great warrior-king like Richard the Lion Heart was as proud of his skill as a minstrel as of his prowess in battle.

The music of the Middle Ages was, judged by our standards, very simple. The range of notes was small and the rhythm of the music irregular. None the less, it could be very dignified and beautiful. In church music the Middle Ages produced the famous plainsong, which is still used in some churches for the chanting of psalms and anthems.

Medieval Architecture

1. *Parish Churches and Cathedrals.* In the churches and cathedrals of western Europe medieval art and craftsmanship reached their highest point. The church buildings of the Middle Ages have been called 'sermons in stone.'

The parish church often enshrines the history of its district. In the Middle Ages it was the centre of the religious life of the parish, and every one attended it. It was also a place for social gatherings, and perhaps a school, while in time of danger it served as a refuge.

The earliest churches were often planned as little more than a rectangle, with the long sides running east and west, and the altar placed at the east end. Some of the early churches were modelled on the Roman public halls, or basilicas; these possessed a semicircular end, or apse, behind the altar, and the nave was already divided into aisles by two rows of columns. The earliest Norman churches, however, were usually without aisles. In the course of the four centuries following the Norman Conquest many changes were often made in the original building, and one of the

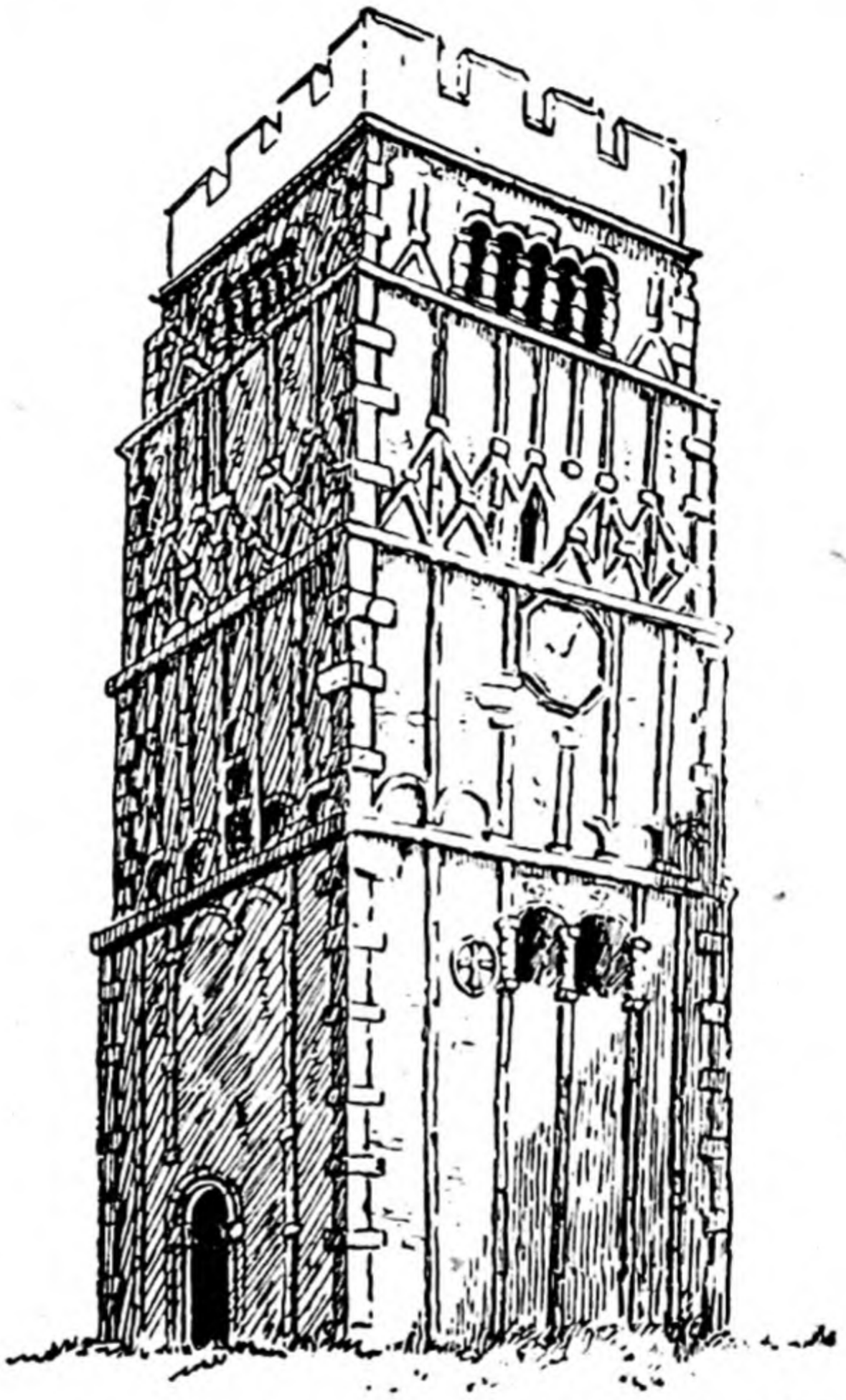
chief joys in visiting old churches is to 'spot' the joints in the stonework or the different architectural styles which indicate such changes. In the thirteenth century an aisle was sometimes added to the nave—usually on the north side, so as not to interfere with the graves on the south; the east end, or chancel, was often lengthened. In the fourteenth century a south aisle might be added. In the fifteenth century, with the growing wealth of the country due to the wool-trade, the nave might be raised and an upper row of windows or clerestory inserted to let in more light and provide more window-space for the glorious stained glass of the period. Sometimes additional porches were added, a tower built or added to, and the interior of the church enriched with delicate wood carving. Some churches were built on a cross-shaped plan with small wings or transepts projecting north and south at the junction of the nave and chancel; but this plan was commoner with cathedrals than with parish churches.

After the early Saxon churches, which were often built of wood, the chief building-material was the local stone of the district. Throughout most of England limestone was commonly used. But in East Anglia flints found in the chalk were used, and in western England soft, reddish sandstone was employed. The rich and noble churches of East Anglia have been wittily said to be built of wool, for it was from the profitable woollen trade that the necessary money was obtained.

The interiors of these medieval churches usually possessed more colour and more ornamentation than at the present day. Woodwork and even parts of the stonework were sometimes painted. The walls were adorned with frescoes, or wall-paintings; the Last Judgment was a common subject for these paintings, as witness the famous picture in Chaldon Church, in Surrey. Few seats were provided, the congregation either standing or kneeling on the floor. Our saying, 'the weakest go to the wall,' reminds us that stone ledges

were made against the wall for the aged and weak to sit upon.

The cathedral was the church of the bishop and his attendant clergy and was on an altogether grander scale



SAXON TOWER OF EARLS BARTON CHURCH, NORTHANTS

Notice (*a*) 'long and short' work along the wall-edges; (*b*) long, narrow pilaster-like strips of stone on the wall-faces; (*c*) small round-headed windows divided by baluster-shaped shafts; (*d*) slight narrowing upward, and the absence of buttresses. The parapet is of a later date.

than the parish church. Very often it was also the church of a monastery, and had attached to it various monastic buildings. Even those cathedrals not served by monks usually had cloisters attached, as at Wells. Here, however, we shall consider only the cathedral church itself.

This was always cross-shaped, or cruciform, with chancel and nave running east and west, and transepts north and

south. The chief alterations made during the centuries to these cathedrals were extensions at the east end behind the altar. This was due to a desire to provide a large space behind the altar, perhaps for processions, or to build chapels or chantries, or to house the bones of some local saint in a

ST JOHN'S CHAPEL

This chapel, in the White Tower of the Tower of London, is a good example of the strength and massiveness of Norman architecture.

noble shrine. If a lady-chapel, in honour of the Virgin Mary, were built, it was usually added on to the east end. Despite the few alterations made to the general plan of cathedrals in the Middle Ages, the same cathedral often shows wide differences in style in its various parts, due perhaps to repairs, a desire at the time to bring part of it 'up to date,' or to the lengthy and piecemeal way in which it was sometimes built.

2. *Styles of Building.* Few buildings of any size were erected in the Dark Ages. In parts of the Mediterranean world the

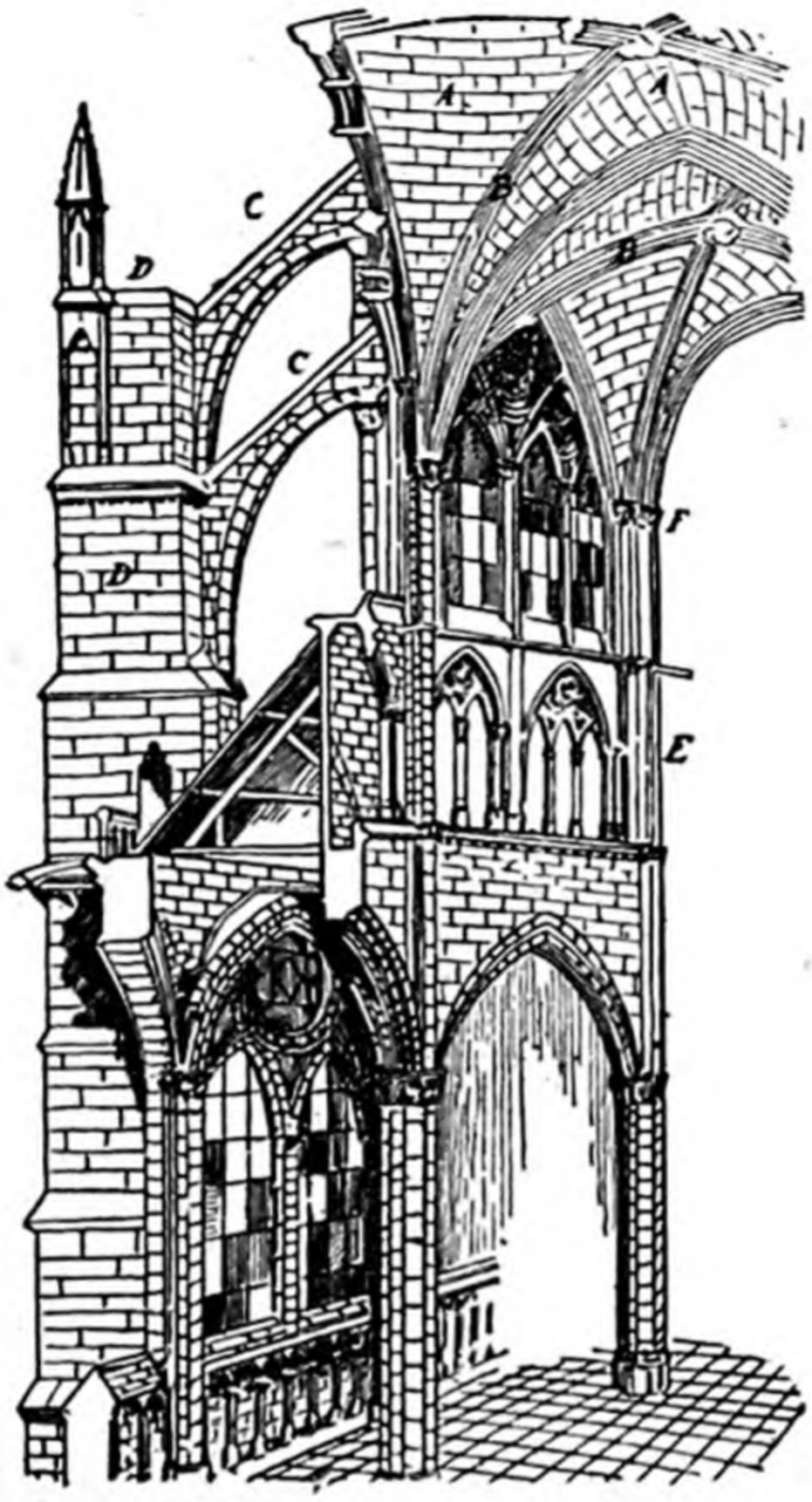
architecture of Byzantium or of the Moors was taken as a model; but in most of western Europe the old Roman style was the model followed. This led to the development of a style of architecture known as Romanesque, or 'like the

NORMAN DOORWAY, ST JOSEPH'S CHAPEL, GLASTONBURY
Notice the deeply recessed round archway, richly ornamented with mouldings.

Roman,' represented in England by the Saxon and Norman styles.

Few Anglo-Saxon remains exist, partly because the Anglo-Saxons built largely with wood (the Anglo-Saxon word for 'to build' was *getimbrian*—to construct in wood). Stone was sometimes used, however, and from what still stands we can note the following as characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon style: towers narrowing slightly towards the top; 'long and short' work at the edges; no buttresses; small windows with round or triangular-shaped heads and often divided into two by a baluster-shaped shaft. The walls are generally of rubble and present a rough and unskilful appearance.

After 1066 the stronger Norman style was introduced, still characterized by round-headed windows and doors, which were one of the distinguishing features of Romanesque buildings. In addition to this the chief marks of Norman



CROSS-SECTION OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL.

A, vaulting; *B*, ribs; *C*, flying buttresses; *D*, buttress; *E*, low windows; *F*, clerestory.

architecture are: very thick walls; small windows—sometimes, in later work, completely circular in shape; massive pillars; 'cushion' capitals shaped by cutting away the underpart of the block of stone surmounting the column; rows of ornament of simple design, of which the zig-zag, the billet, and the beak-head are among the commonest. The whole style suggests massive strength and plainness relieved by simple ornamentation.

Norman architecture lasted about a century after the Conquest, when it gave way to Gothic, which was a departure from Romanesque. Gothic architecture is distinguished

by its pointed arches; its buttresses; its large stained-glass windows, with the 'flying buttresses' permitting a clerestory or upper row of windows; and its ribbed vaulting. Gothic architecture is graceful and elegant, and gives an impression of soaring upward as if man were aspiring to Heaven.

Gothic architecture developed three main styles in England. With what we have learnt of Anglo-Saxon and Norman architecture we can classify medieval English styles as follows, bearing in mind the approximate nature of the dates:

Saxon	before 1066	Romanesque
Norman	1066–1166	Romanesque
Early English	1166–1266	Gothic
Decorated	1266–1366	Gothic
Perpendicular	1366–1500	Gothic

The chief features of Early English buildings are: long, narrow lancet windows; slender columns with capitals of stiff-looking foliage; lofty, pointed arches; rows of dog-tooth ornament. Early English buildings are more graceful and delicate than Norman work.

The 'Decorated' style largely explains itself. The main problems of building had been solved, and the stone-carver devoted himself to more elaborate decorative work. Windows became larger, and their stonework was made to form geometrical and, later, flowing designs; carved foliage became more natural in appearance and was more freely used; ball-flower ornament replaced the Early English dog-tooth. Some of the later 'Decorated' work can be accused of showing an excess of ornament.

The 'Perpendicular' style was in some ways a return to greater simplicity. The upright bars, or mullions, in the windows were usually carried right through to the top; while in large windows cross-bars, or transoms, added to the general right-angled effect of 'Perpendicular' Gothic. Archways over doors were often flattened at the top and

enclosed in a square frame. In some ways 'Perpendicular' architecture contains too many straight lines; but it possesses a beauty of its own, with its large windows, which

ST GEORGE'S CHAPEL, WINDSOR

Built mainly by Edward IV (1461–1483), this chapel is a fine example of the 'perpendicular' style of Gothic. Notice the large window, with its flattened arch at the top and its long, straight mullions and transoms. The roof is fan-vaulted, and the stalls are richly carved. Above the stalls hang the banners of the Knights of the Garter.

Photo F.G.O.S.

transform the walls into almost complete stretches of stained glass, its majestic towers, and its fan-vaulted roofs suggestive of an avenue of trees.

Gothic architecture is the glory of the Middle Ages, though later centuries thought to show their superiority by giving it its name 'Gothic,' which suggests a barbaric origin.

Its use in church architecture has alone been described here; but towards the end of the Middle Ages it was also employed for gildhalls, town halls, and universities.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write down four important differences between education in the Middle Ages and education now.

2. Imagine yourself an English student at the University of Paris. Describe briefly some of the features of your life there.

3. Write notes on: troubadours; *Song of Roland*; the Round Table; the *Niebelungenlied*.

4. Write a short essay upon any medieval church or cathedral with which you are acquainted.

5. In what main ways do the Gothic styles of architecture differ from the Romanesque?

6. Write down in order the chief styles of architecture in medieval England, and place the following features against the style to which they belong: zig-zag ornament; lancet windows; ball-flower ornament; long and short work; fan vaulting; geometrical window-tracery; long, straight mullions; dog-tooth ornament; cushion capitals. Then complete your table with any other features mentioned in the text.

PART IV
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEDIEVAL NATIONS

CHAPTER XIII
ENGLAND UNDER STRONG KINGS: 1066–1199

English Kings

Normans	William I	(1066–1087)
	William II	(1087–1100)
	Henry I	(1100–1135)
	Stephen	(1135–1154)
Plantagenets	Henry II	(1154–1189)
	Richard I	(1189–1199)

The Effects of the Norman Conquest

In dealing with the structure of the Middle Ages (feudalism, the Church, towns, and commerce) we have already touched upon many aspects of the history of England in common with the other nations of Europe. In the next few chapters we shall devote our whole attention to the story of these nations and in particular to the story of our own.

The invasion of England by William of Normandy, his coronation on Christmas Day, 1066, in Westminster Abbey, and his later conquest of the north and the Fen District had very important results upon our history. Norman kings governed England for nearly 100 years, and later lines of English kings (Plantagenets, Lancastrians, and so on) sprang from these Norman rulers. The Conquest, however, meant far more than a mere change of kings. It was, in many respects, the most important event in our history.

England was brought into much closer contact with the Continent. The Normans were among the most advanced

people of their time; they were clever craftsmen, strong rulers, devout Churchmen, and patrons of learning. Edward the Confessor had already introduced many of their ways into England. William the Conqueror and his successors completed this work. Perhaps the biggest outward sign of advance was in the art of building. The old Saxon churches of wood or rough stonework were replaced by solid buildings of stone, elaborately carved after the Norman fashion. Wonderful stone abbeys and cathedrals arose at places like Chester and Durham; these were symbols both of Norman craftsmanship and Norman devotion. Henceforth, for the first time since the Roman occupation, England shared to the full in the life of the rest of Europe.

The English language was also affected. The conquered English kept their Teutonic tongue, which was based upon the original Anglo-Saxon, with the addition in the northern and eastern districts of many Danish words. But this native tongue was very different from that of the new rulers of Church and State. Norman kings and barons spoke a form of French; Norman bishops and abbots introduced Latin to a much greater degree into the Church. During the next few centuries practically all documents of any importance were written in old French or in Latin. In the course of time a common language grew up, composed mainly of the native Anglo-Saxon, but with many Latin and French additions. As might be expected, the new words were connected with such things as war, justice, government, religion, and art. Good examples of such words are 'battle,' 'judge,' 'minister,' 'council,' 'cathedral,' and 'porch.' Try to find out what these words are in modern French, and, if possible, in Latin, and notice the similarity between them.

We have already seen in Chapter VII the work of thē Conqueror in extending the feudal system over his new land. By bringing all England under his control he made effective the feudal notion that all land really belonged to the king. Before his time the north and north-east of England had

NORMAN AND PLANTAGENET KINGS OF ENGLAND FROM 1066 TO 1399

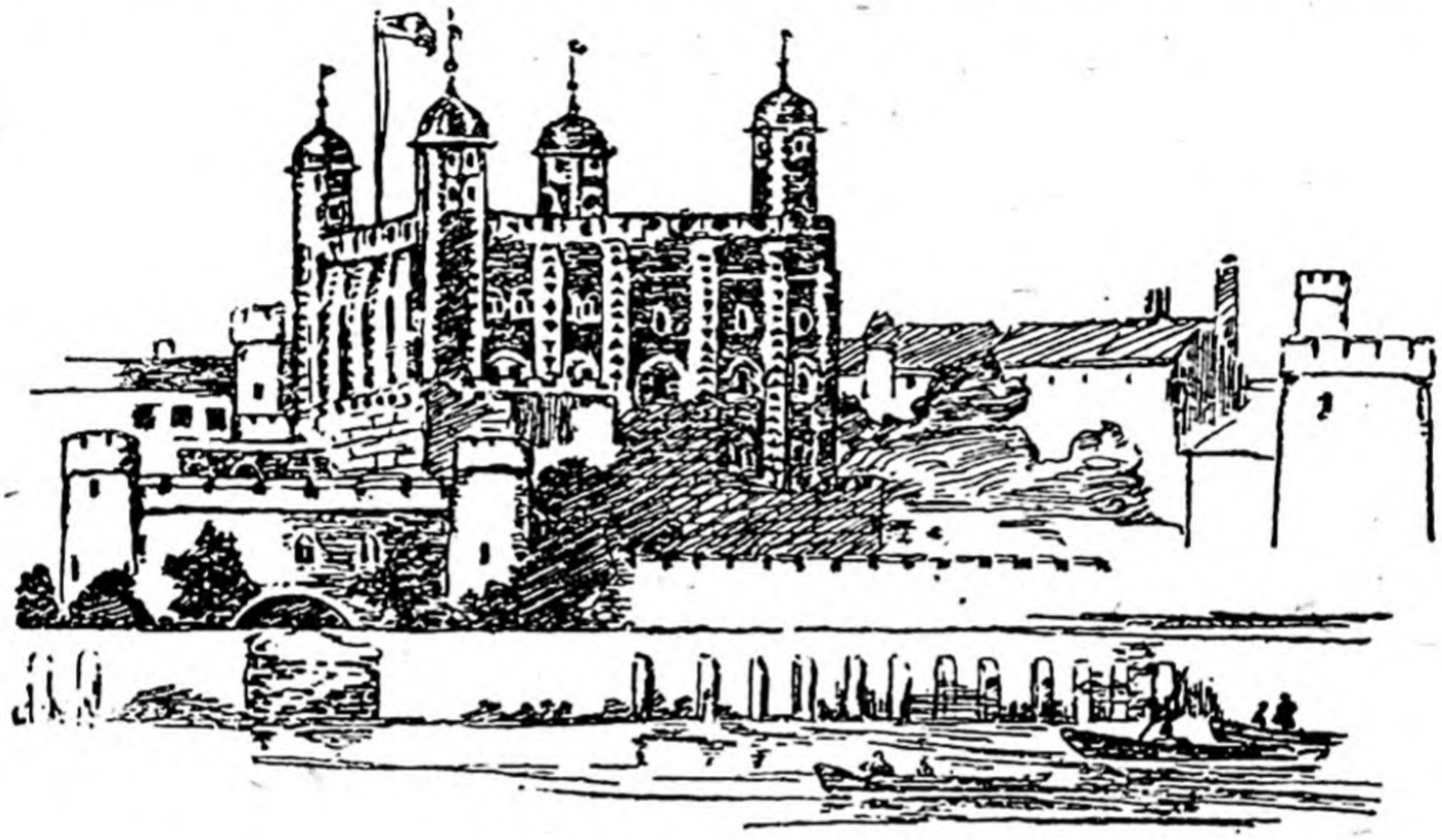
(Kings in capital letters)

WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR
(1066–1087)

- Robert, Duke of Normandy
- WILLIAM RUFUS (1087–1100)
- HENRY I (1100–1135)
  - Matilda, *m.* Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou
    - HENRY II (1154–1189) *m.* Eleanor of Aquitaine
      - RICHARD I (1189–1199)
      - JOHN (1199–1216)
        - HENRY III (1216–1272)
          - EDWARD I (1272–1307)
            - EDWARD II (1307–1327)
              - EDWARD III (1327–1377)
                - The Black Prince *d.* 1376
                  - RICHARD II (1377–1399)
- Adela, *m.* Stephen, Count of Blois
  - STEPHEN (1135–1154)

largely escaped the royal power. William altered this and exacted military service and obedience from his tenants in Yorkshire and Durham as sternly as from those in Middlesex or Surrey.

Perhaps the greatest benefit that the Norman Conquest gave to England was the union of all parts of the country



THE TOWER OF LONDON

under a strong king. William took active steps to see that feudalism in England did not split the country up into many separate parts as it had done in France and Germany. He made his sub-tenants, assembled on Salisbury Plain, swear an oath to be loyal to their king first and foremost. His sheriff in every shire kept an eye upon the unruly barons, and collected the king's rents and taxes. The Domesday survey enabled the king to see that no one escaped his fair share of taxation. The Norman barons were not, of course, robbed of every privilege. They had many rights over the Anglo-Saxon peasantry which they could enforce in their baronial courts. They had the right of advising the king in the feudal *consilium* or *curia*—the council or court composed of tenants-in-chief, which henceforth took the place of the old Witan. But the Conqueror's hand was heavy upon Norman barons and English peasants alike, and rebellions

of the barons were as ruthlessly put down as William had previously laid waste the north or robbed English earls and freemen of their estates.

Outward signs of this strong rule were seen in the castles that the early Normans erected. The first to be built were simply mounds, or *mottes*, of earth, surmounted by a wooden tower and palisade, and surrounded by a moat. As these wooden structures could easily be set on fire, they soon gave way to massive stone keeps and walls. The best-known of all Norman castles is the Tower of London, built by the Conqueror to keep the proud city in subjection.

William the Conqueror and the Church

William had been supported in his work of conquering England by the Pope and the Church. In return the Conqueror showed himself a true friend of the Church. This was the age of the reforming monk, Hildebrand, who in 1073 became Pope Gregory VII (see Chapter IX). William made his friend, Lanfranc, formerly Abbot of Bec, in Normandy, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the two men began the reform of the English Church along the lines laid down by Hildebrand. The learning of the clergy was improved, and their lives were reformed. Many of the English clergy had wives; marriage of the clergy was henceforth forbidden. Normans and other foreigners were made bishops and abbots, just as they had become lords of the manor. The greatest privilege of all conferred by William upon the Church was the right to have its own courts of law, presided over by Churchmen. These Church courts soon grew extremely powerful; they tried all cases concerning clergymen, as well as cases concerning marriages and wills. William and Lanfranc were firm friends, and under them this separation of the courts worked well. In the next century, however, it led to the famous quarrel between Henry II and Becket.

William was no slave to the Church, although he was its

firm friend. He appointed his own bishops, and in 1077 —the very year when the Emperor Henry IV humbled himself before the Pope at Canossa (see Chapter IX)—he refused to take an oath of fealty to Gregory VII in respect of his new kingdom.

The Death of William

In England William the King put down the feudal barons; in France William the Duke fought against the King. In 1087, in a campaign against the King of France, William lost his life. The Norman Duke was entering the town of Mantes, when his horse trod on a burning ember and plunged wildly. The rider was badly injured and died soon afterwards.

William had been a stern, and at times a cruel, king; but his sternness had been shown towards Norman and Saxon alike and was for the good of his kingdom. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* calls him

> a very wise and a great man, and more honoured and powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to those good men who loved God, but severe beyond measure towards those who withstood his will.

One of the darkest stains upon his character was his setting aside as royal hunting-grounds of vast tracts of land, like the New Forest, in Hampshire. Here the dreaded forest-law was enforced.

> He made large forests for the deer, and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade killing the deer, so also the boars; and he loved the tall stags as if he were their father.

The Conqueror's Sons

1. *William Rufus.* William's eldest son, Robert, succeeded to his father's Duchy of Normandy, but he never wore the crown of England. The English crown passed to the second

living son of the Conqueror, namely, William, nicknamed Rufus, or Red, from his fiery face.

William Rufus was a strong ruler like his father. But he was cruel, evil-living, and greedy. England groaned under his government. In 1089 Lanfranc died, and the last restraint upon the misdeeds of the new King was gone. From 1089 to 1093 Rufus deliberately kept the office of Archbishop of Canterbury vacant, so that he himself could enjoy all the revenues. Then in 1093 the King fell ill, and thought he was about to die. Fearing for his soul, he forced a gentle Italian scholar named Anselm, who had been Lanfranc's pupil at the Abbey of Bec, to fill the vacant office of Archbishop. Anselm was unwilling to occupy such a high position, but in the end he gave way. The scared King recovered from his illness and soon regretted his appointment. Anselm proved a stout defender of the rights of the Church and a stern critic of the King's evil ways. King and Archbishop soon quarrelled, and Anselm went into exile for the remainder of the reign.

In 1100 Rufus was hunting in the New Forest when he was slain by an arrow—whether accidentally or not we shall never know. His body was conveyed by a charcoal-burner to the near-by monastery of Winchester, where the startled monks gave it burial. The gravestone can still be seen in the choir of Winchester Cathedral; but the royal remains were removed from their tomb by the soldiers of Cromwell over 500 years later.

We can be sure that few people, except the King's own evil counsellors, regretted his death. Only one good thing is remembered about him. It was Rufus who built Westminster Hall, that massive stone building which has witnessed so many stirring events in our history and which still stands by the present Houses of Parliament.

2. *Henry I.* On the death of Rufus the crown of England was seized by the Conqueror's youngest son, Henry, nicknamed Beauclerc, or the Scholar, from his ability to read

and write. The eldest son, Robert, Duke of Normandy, was away on the First Crusade, and although on his return he claimed the throne of England, he was defeated at Tenchebrai in Normandy in 1106 and was unable to make good his claim.

Henry I began his reign by issuing a Charter to the nation: the Church was to be free, oppression was to cease, the laws of Edward the Confessor were to be observed. A further step which pleased the nation was Henry's marriage to Matilda, daughter of the King of Scotland and a descendant of Alfred the Great. This marriage bade fair to link Norman and Saxon together.

The marriage ceremony was performed by Anselm, who had been recalled from his exile. Soon the scholar King and the scholar Archbishop were involved in a fresh quarrel. Anselm denied the king's right of investing bishops with their ring and staff; while Henry claimed that only by such means could he maintain his power over princes of the Church who were also great feudal landowners. This was really the English counterpart of the bitter investiture struggle that was being waged on the Continent (see Chapter IX). It was settled in England in 1106 along the same lines as it was later settled abroad. The ring and the staff were to be conferred by the Church and not by the king, but only after the feudal oath of homage had been taken. This still left the king with much control over the appointment of bishops, although he no longer possessed the power of bestowing upon them their signs of office. It was a compromise that worked well so long as the king and the Church authorities were in agreement.

Henry I proved a wise ruler. He began the arrangement of sending the royal judges round the country to try difficult cases and to keep an eye on the barons and their courts. Under him the King's Council, or Court, began to split up into different parts. Some of its members acted as judges. Others, who kept the royal accounts at Winchester (the old

capital), came to be called 'Barons of the Exchequer,' probably from the chequered black and white squares marked on the tables to help them count up the money.

Henry's reign was marred by a great disaster. His only son was drowned off the coast of France in the *White Ship* (1118), and it is said that the English King never smiled again. Henry made the barons swear to accept his daughter, Matilda, as queen on his death; but the barons were only waiting their chance to throw off the royal power, which had been pressing too heavily upon them. Their chance came in 1135 with the King's death.

HENRY MOURNING THE DEATH OF HIS SON

Feudal Anarchy

The barons refused to recognize Matilda as their queen. Instead they chose as their ruler Stephen, the son of William the Conqueror's daughter, Adela. Stephen's nineteen years on the throne of England were, it has been truly said, not a reign but a war. Stephen was weak and was opposed by Matilda. The King of Scotland invaded England to help Matilda, but was defeated at the Battle of the Standard in 1138. The barons seized the chance that the civil war offered them. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells a pitiful tale of the woe and misery of these years:

When the traitors perceived that he was a mild man, and a soft and a good, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him and sworn oaths, but they no faith kept; all became forsworn, and broke their allegiance, for every rich man built his castles, and defended them against him, and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work

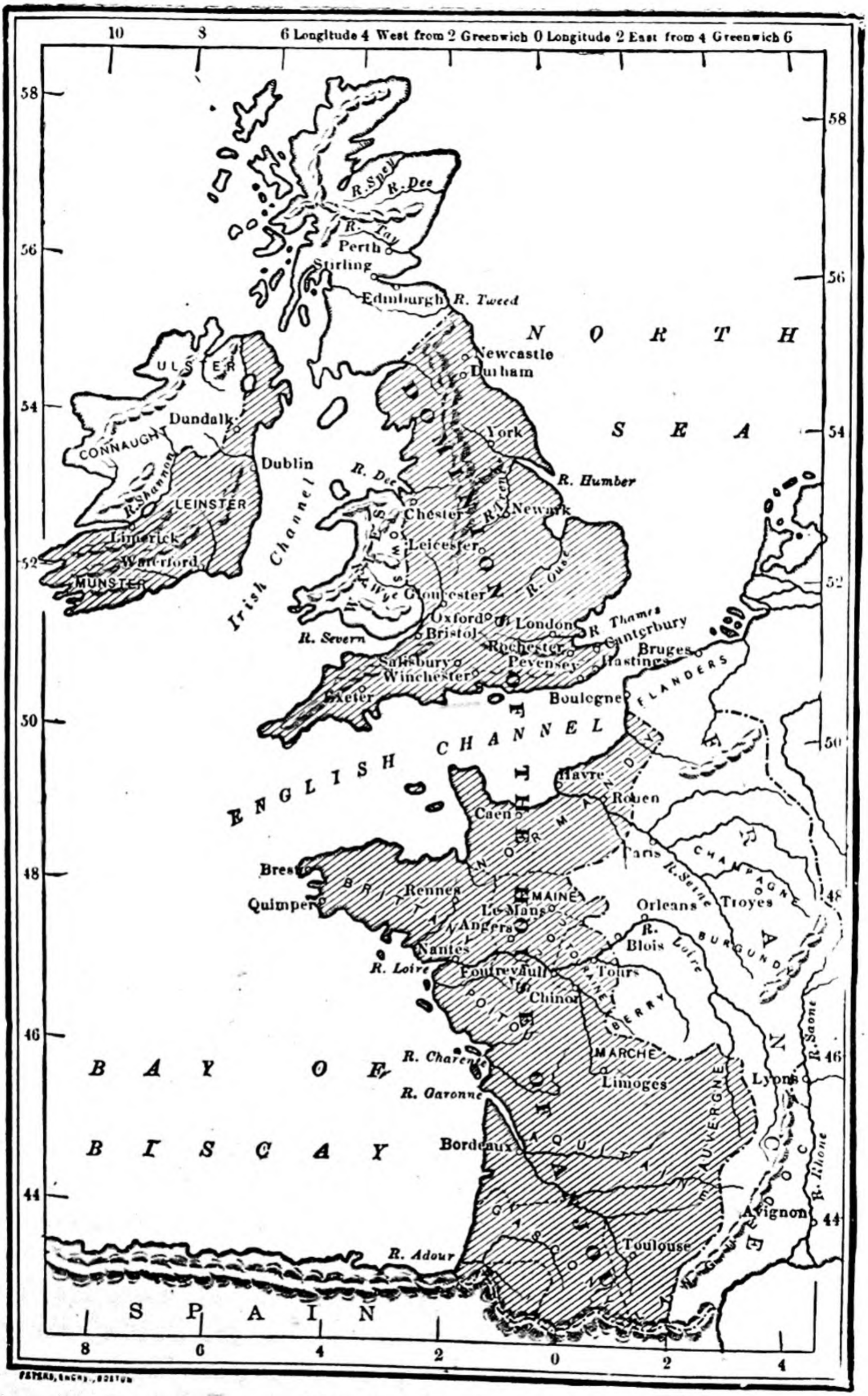
at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men. Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable. . . . They hung some up by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads, and twisted it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. . . . You might go for a whole day's journey, and never find a house inhabited or a field ploughed. The earth bore no corn, for the land was quite exhausted with such deeds. Men said openly that Christ and his saints slept.

It is when we read of such horrors that we realize the benefits that strong kings like William I and Henry I gave to the country. At length Matilda's son, Henry of Anjou, forced Stephen to agree to the Treaty of Wallingford (1153), by which Henry was to become the next king. A year later Stephen died, and the feudal nightmare was over. His successor, Henry II, proved one of the greatest and strongest of English kings.

Henry II, the First Plantagenet

Henry II, or Henry of Anjou, as he was called from his father, who was the Count of Anjou, was the first of a new royal line, the Plantagenets. They were so called from the custom, adopted by Henry's father, of wearing a sprig of yellow broom (Latin *planta genista*) in their caps while out hunting.

Henry II was a remarkable man in many ways. His vast possessions—often called the Angevin Empire, from the family estates in Anjou—stretched far beyond the limits of our own country. In France Henry ruled over more land than the French King himself. Anjou and Maine he



THE ANGEVIN EMPIRE

inherited from his father; Normandy he had obtained from Stephen; his marriage to Eleanor of Aquitaine brought him the south-west of France; his son's marriage later gave him control over Brittany. In theory Henry owed the French King feudal homage for these possessions; but in practice he was their real ruler, as in France the King as yet had little power over his feudal vassals. Henry's power extended far over our own islands, too. England and much of Wales were his. He encouraged certain English nobles, under the Earl of Pembroke (nicknamed 'Strongbow'), to cross to Ireland, where they conquered estates. Later Henry, who had been granted Ireland by Pope Adrian IV (the only Englishman ever to occupy the Papal chair), received the homage of most of the Irish chiefs; but in actual fact English power was confined to a small district round Dublin, which came to be known as the Pale. An accident—lucky from Henry's point of view—placed the King of Scots in his power, and Henry obliged him to do homage for the whole of his kingdom. Thus the first Plantagenet's power stretched in a long line from the north of England (and in a vague way from Scotland) right down to the Pyrenees, in the south of France.

In many ways this vast Empire was good for England. It gave Henry great power and made him more than a match for rebellious barons. It kept up the flow of ideas from the Continent to England; the study of law was being keenly pursued in Europe at this time, and Henry, who was himself a student whenever time allowed, introduced to England such of the new knowledge as he thought suitable. Yet it would not have been good for England if our kings had possessed this large Empire for long. It was bound to cause wars and bloodshed between the kings of England and of France, and the results of these wars would fall most heavily upon their subjects. Furthermore, it kept the English King abroad and prevented him from becoming an Englishman. Henry II spent more of his time in France than in England.

His native language was French, and in common with most of his courtiers he could never speak the English language of the peasantry.

Nevertheless, this French-speaking King did good work for England. Writers of his time give us a clear impression of his appearance and character. He was of medium height but broad-chested and very powerful. When he was in a peaceful mood, his grey eyes were as gentle as any dove's; but when he was roused to anger, as he often was, his eyes flashed like lightning, and he was said to throw himself on the floor and foam at the mouth. He cared little for the outward show of royalty, dressed plainly, and ate simple food. The outstanding impression left by those who knew him is one of never-ending activity, whether of body or mind. His chaplain complains that those who accompanied him never knew what he would do next. If he had promised overnight to spend the next day at their resting-place, he would change his mind early the next morning, "and by his sudden change of mind, will throw everybody's plans into confusion." We are also told that "although his legs are bruised and livid from hard riding, he never sits down except when on horseback or at meals. On a single day, if necessary, he travels a journey of four or five days, and thus anticipating the plans of his enemies, he baffles their desires by his sudden movements."

The Restoration of Order

Henry's first steps were to restore order in England. He made the barons take down the castles that they had unlawfully built; he obtained back the royal lands that the barons had acquired; he issued new coins to take the place of those that the barons had issued; and he expelled the foreign mercenary soldiers who regarded England merely as a land of plunder.

Henry was not content with just restoring order. He desired to reform the government of the country and

strengthen the royal power so that further anarchy would be impossible. To do this he set about reforming the law-courts. It was his attack upon the Church courts that produced his famous quarrel with Becket.

Henry II and Thomas Becket

William I had allowed the Church to establish its own courts. These had grown in power during the misrule of Stephen, and Henry decided to bring them more closely under his own control. They had power over far too many of the King's subjects. In the Middle Ages many more people were connected officially with the Church than at the present day; there were numerous people in minor orders—so many that the ability to read a little Latin was often taken as sufficient proof that a person was in orders. The punishments inflicted in the Church courts were very light from Henry's point of view; murder was punished by excommunication or expulsion from holy orders. The Pope had the power of deciding any cases brought before the Church courts, and this was regarded by Henry as an interference with his own royal rights. Furthermore, Henry's treasury lost many fines by cases not being tried in his own courts.

These facts decided Henry to limit the power of the Church courts. In 1162 the Archbishop of Canterbury died, and Henry appointed in his place Thomas Becket. The King and Becket had been close friends, and for many years Becket had acted as Chancellor, or right-hand man, to the King. As such he had lived a life of splendour and had done all he could to increase the royal power.

In his new position Becket proved a changed man. He put away his splendid clothes, wore a hair-shirt next his skin, and fasted often. He was now as great a champion of the Church as he had previously been of the king. In 1164 Henry brought forward a set of laws called the Constitutions of Clarendon. These proposed that clergy-

men accused of crime could still be tried in the Church courts,

> and if the clerk shall be convicted and shall confess, the Church should no longer protect him.

That is, if found guilty in the Church court, he should be handed over to the royal courts for punishment. In other ways, too, the power of the Church courts was to be cut down, and the king, not the Pope, was to be the highest authority.

Becket stoutly refused to consent to these new arrangements, and, fearing for his life at the hands of the quick-tempered King, fled from the country. For six years (1164–1170) he remained in exile. Most of the English bishops supported Henry, and even the Pope thought that Becket was going too far. At last the quarrel was patched up, and Becket returned to England. His old fiery temper flared up again. He excommunicated a family of Norman knights who had been given some Church lands in his absence; he attacked the bishops who had supported Henry; he even excommunicated the Archbishop of York for having crowned the King's son. Henry, who was spending Christmas in France, was infuriated. "Will none of the cowards that do eat my bread deliver me from this upstart priest?" he exclaimed. Four knights took Henry at his word, crossed immediately to England, and slew the Archbishop on the steps of his own Cathedral (1170).

Christendom was appalled at the crime. Henry was afraid to face the Pope's messengers and crossed to Ireland. On his return to France he promised to go on a Crusade to the Holy Land or fight against the Moors in Spain. None of these things came to pass; but the proud King, now humbled and dismayed, crossed to England, did penance at Becket's tomb, and bared his back to a large gathering of bishops and monks who inflicted strokes upon him. He had to give up his scheme for diminishing the power of the

Church courts, and 'benefit of clergy' remained in England for several more centuries. In his main aim Henry had failed; but he did succeed in checking the power of the Church courts in a few important respects.

Becket was officially made a saint in 1173; but from the

THE MURDER OF BECKET

This picture from the walls of Preston Church had been overlaid with many coats of whitewash and plaster, probably by the order of Henry VIII, who commanded that all pictures of Becket should be removed or obliterated from the churches. It was probably painted in the reign of Edward I, and it is a valuable example of mural decoration belonging to the thirteenth century. Note the divine hand over the dying Archbishop ready to receive his spirit.

time of his death the people had hailed him as a martyr and a saint. Pilgrims began to visit his tomb, and miracles were said to be worked there; during the remainder of the Middle Ages the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury was the most famous centre for pilgrimages in England. The *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer and the Pilgrims' Way along the downs of southern England remind us at the present day of the bands of pilgrims that once flocked "the holy blissful martyr for to seek."

Henry II's Reform of the Law

Henry was more successful in reforming the other law-courts of the land. He revived the practice of his grandfather, Henry I, of sending royal judges round the country. These judges did much to develop the English 'common law' (law and custom *common* to the whole of the country) by the way in which they overrode the different laws and customs of the various districts into which they travelled. The barons' courts were not abolished; but in time the king's judges were found to be fairer and so obtained much of their business. These travelling justices were also able to keep an eye upon the sheriffs, who were sometimes forgetful of the interests of their royal master. The modern judges of assize are descended from these eleventh-century Norman and Plantagenet judges.

Henry also introduced what was really the beginning of our modern trial by jury.

The Anglo-Saxon methods of trial were still widely used in Henry's time. One of these methods was known as 'compurgation'; the accused person was declared not guilty if he could produce twelve persons (friends or relatives) who would swear on oath that they believed him innocent. If another twelve men declared him guilty, he then had to be tried in some other way. This other way was known as trial by ordeal, which was a kind of appeal to Providence or God to declare the person's innocence or guilt. There were various kinds of ordeal. In one the accused person was tied up and thrown into the water; if he sank, he was declared innocent; if he floated, he was found guilty, as it was said that even the water rejected him. Another kind of ordeal was to make the person plunge his hand into boiling water and pick up a stone at the bottom. His hand and arm were then bound up, and if at the end of three days, when the bandages were removed, the skin had festered, he was declared guilty. A further ordeal was to

walk barefoot over red-hot ploughshares. It was believed that God would protect the innocent, but desert the guilty.

The Normans had introduced what was really yet another kind of ordeal, namely, trial by combat. The accuser and the accused fought each other, until one gave in by uttering

TRIAL BY COMBAT
From a manuscript of the fifteenth century.

the word 'craven.' Real or wooden weapons could be used. This method appealed to the warlike Normans. It could also be used by priests and women, who were allowed to hire champions to fight on their behalf.

None of these methods was at all satisfactory, and there must have been many ways by which crafty people could defeat the ends of justice. Henry II did not abolish these methods outright; this would have aroused too much opposition. He arranged, however, that in cases tried by his judges, twelve jurymen should bring forward, or 'present,' the accused, who was then tried by ordeal. In cases where

the ownership of land was disputed, the case could be tried by an appeal to twelve men who gave evidence concerning the facts as they knew them. These men acted, therefore, as witnesses. In time, however, they developed into the modern jury, which does not *give* evidence, but listens to the evidence of others. Alongside this development the older methods of trial gradually died out, and in 1215 clergymen were forbidden by the Church to take part in trials by ordeal.

Henry II and the Army

The military side of feudalism was sometimes a source of danger to the King, as it encouraged barons to train soldiers. Henry took two measures to counteract this.

In 1159 he extended a system, begun by Henry I, of allowing the barons to pay a sum of money instead of providing soldiers. This money was known as shield-money, or scutage (Latin *scutum* = a shield). With it the king could hire soldiers, who would be much more faithful than the baronial followers, and would serve longer than the forty days laid down by feudalism.

In 1181 Henry issued a law called the Assize of Arms. This was an attempt to revive the old Anglo-Saxon 'fyrd,' or army of freemen, which was bound by custom to fight for the king in case of danger. Henry ordered every freeman to provide himself with arms and armour according to his rank, so that he would be ready to assist the king if required. It was the sheriff's job to see that this was done.

The End of the Twelfth Century

The end of Henry's reign was very unhappy, and men whispered that he was being punished for Becket's death. Two of his sons died, and his wife stirred up the other two sons, Richard and John, to rebel against their father. In 1189 the great King died.

He was succeeded by Richard I, 'Cœur de Lion.' Richard spent only a few months of his ten years' reign in

England. The rest of the time he spent on the Third Crusade (see Chapter X) or in France fighting against the King. To raise money for the Crusade (and later for Richard's ransom) numerous royal rights were sold. Richard declared that he would have sold London if he could. Richard's reign proved a testing-time for the Government; but Henry's reforms had made the royal power too strong to be easily overthrown. The King's brother, John, tried unsuccessfully to raise a rebellion. In 1199 Richard died fighting against Philip Augustus, the King of France.

The twelfth century had seen many important developments in England. Henry I and Henry II had strengthened the royal power. In Henry I's reign the Cistercians (see Chapter VIII) arrived in England, where they did much to promote sheep-farming. With a settled government, trade developed and towns increased in size and number. Under Richard I many charters were sold to towns to provide money for the King's needs. England was benefiting much from the rule of her strong kings.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write brief notes on: (*a*) Lanfranc, (*b*) Anselm, (*c*) Becket.

2. What were the three languages in frequent use in England after the Norman Conquest? Who used them?

3. What reforms were begun by Henry I and extended by Henry II?

4. Write notes on: trial by ordeal, trial by jury, benefit of clergy, common law, judges of assize.

5. Write a brief account of the Angevin Empire. In what ways was it (*a*) good, (*b*) bad, for England?

6. Explain the reasons that led Henry II to attack the Church courts.

7. How did Henry II reform the army?

CHAPTER XIV

MAGNA CARTA AND THE GROWTH OF PARLIAMENT

English Kings

Plantagenets	John	(1199–1216)
	Henry III	(1216–1272)
	Edward I	(1272–1307)

The Break-up of the Angevin Empire

RICHARD was succeeded by his worthless brother, John, who had already shown himself an ungrateful son, a treacherous brother, and a cruel and greedy ruler. John's reign is noteworthy for three quarrels: his quarrel with Philip Augustus of France, which resulted in the loss of most of the English overseas possessions; his quarrel with the Pope, Innocent III, which resulted in the English King becoming the Pope's feudal vassal; and his quarrel with his subjects, which resulted in Magna Carta.

The French King, Philip Augustus, was an able ruler who desired to bring all France under his control. He summoned John to Paris to do homage for his possessions. John refused, and Philip thereupon declared war. John's position was weak, because many of his barons supported his nephew, Arthur, who really had a better claim by descent to John's possessions than John himself. The unfortunate Arthur, a boy of fourteen, fell into John's hands and was put to death. This cruelty did John no good. In 1204 Normandy was lost. Other defeats followed, and soon the English possessions in France were reduced to the wine-producing district of Gascony.

The loss of most of the Angevin Empire was regarded at the time as a great disaster. Really it was good for England,

as the connexion with Normandy had only involved us in useless wars, and its loss made English kings and nobles spend more of their time in England.

The Quarrel with the Pope

On the death of the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1205, John bullied the monks of Canterbury into choosing one of his friends as the next Archbishop. Pope Innocent III—the most powerful Pope in the Middle Ages—refused to accept John's candidate, and chose instead a worthy English scholar and statesman, named Stephen Langton, who was then in Rome. John was so angry that he refused to allow Langton to land in England. In reply Innocent III laid England under an interdict; the churches were closed, and no proper marriage or burial services could be held. People were dismayed at thus being shut off from God, but still John refused to yield. In 1209 the Pope excommunicated John. In 1213 he declared him deposed, and ordered John's old enemy, Philip of France, to invade England. John realized that the game was up. He consented to the appointment of Stephen Langton, handed England over to the Pope, from whom he received it back as a fief, or feudal holding, and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 1000 marks. A mark was worth 13*s.* 4*d.* This submission of John made the Pope henceforth his ally.

John's Quarrel with his Subjects

Throughout his reign John had been arousing the opposition of his subjects, especially of the great barons. He had levied heavy scutages to pay for his wars, and had inflicted heavy fines for trivial offences; as lord of all England he had exacted large sums for the right of succession to feudal estates; he had cut down the timber and sold the livestock of minors who had become his wards. He had starved and hanged innocent people because their relatives had opposed his misrule.

In 1214 John was in France preparing for revenge upon Philip Augustus. Once more his plans failed. His ally, the Emperor, was defeated by the French King at the great battle of Bouvines (1214). John, dispirited, returned home, only to find that the barons, led by Stephen Langton and

Johannes dei grā rex Angl dux hyb dux
sciatis nos intuitu dei z p salute anime nre et omiū m
ecclie Cardinalis Henr Dublīn Archiepi Wiffimi London Peli W
viroz Willmi Manseaffi Comitis Pembroke Willmi Comitis Sar W
chome Basset Alani Basset. Philippi de Albini Robti de Ro
sua integra z libertates suas usq; z ita volum observarī qd app
him z eam optinuimus a dño papa Innocentio tercio confirmari C

FACSIMILE OF TOP LEFT-HAND CORNER OF THE GREAT CHARTER

Showing the beginning of the first seven lines. The Charter, like all important documents for centuries to come, was written in Latin with numerous contractions. In its uncontracted form the first line would read: "*Johannes Dei Gratia Rex Angliae, Dominus Hyberniae, Dux* [*Normanniae*]" or in English: "John, by the grace of God King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke [of Normandy]."

supported by the rich merchants of London, had formed a league against him. On June 15, 1215, at Runnymede, an island in the Thames near Windsor, John, who could not sign his name, was forced to set his Great Seal upon the document embodying the barons' demands. This document was Magna Carta, or the Great Charter.

Magna Carta

The Great Charter was based upon the charter issued by Henry I on his accession. As such it contained little that was really new and was for the most part a statement of the feudal rights of barons and churchmen. The two most important provisions related to taxation and justice:

> No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom unless by the common counsel of our kingdom. And for obtaining

the common counsel of this kingdom as to the assessing of an aid or scutage, we will cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons, by our letters under seal; and we will moreover cause to be summoned generally, through our sheriffs, all others who hold of us in fief.

No freeman shall be arrested, or imprisoned, or deprived of his land, or outlawed or banished or in any way molested, unless by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land.

Other clauses safeguarded the freedom of election to church offices, checked the king's power over the royal forests, and regulated tolls paid by merchants.

In later centuries, especially during the struggle between king and Parliament under the Stuarts, it was often asserted that Magna Carta laid down the doctrines of Parliamentary government, of trial by jury for all men, and of 'no taxation without representation.' This is a complete mistake. Magna Carta was drawn up by the barons and asserted the rights of the barons. The king's power of levying *feudal* dues was to be checked by a *feudal* body composed of tenants-in-chief, *i.e.*, of barons. Others were not represented. Even the famous clause concerning judgment by one's peers or equals did not apply to villeins, since these were not freemen, and thus the greater part of the population was excluded. Nevertheless, Magna Carta *was* an important step in the growth of English liberty. It laid down the principle that the king was not above the law and that his rule ought to be checked, even though as yet it was checked in the interests of only a small minority of the nation. In the twelfth century English kings had increased their power for the nation's good. In the thirteenth century the king's power was now being limited, and this also in the long run was for the nation's good.

John had no intention of carrying out Magna Carta, and he persuaded the Pope, who was now on his side, to absolve him from his promises. The barons called in the aid of the

French King's son. It seemed that England would be rent with war and perhaps come under French rule. The sudden death of John in 1216 averted this calamity.

The Misrule of Henry III

John was succeeded by his son, Henry, a boy of nine. The early years of Henry's reign were happy, as England was governed by wise men like Stephen Langton, William Marshall, and Hubert de Burgh. In 1227 the King took the reins of government in his own hands. Marshall was dead, Langton died in the following year, and soon afterwards de Burgh was disgraced. The middle period of Henry's reign was one of misrule leading once more to civil war.

Henry III was religious by nature, and it is to him that we owe most of the present-day Westminster Abbey, built on the site of Edward the Confessor's earlier church. But he was weak and easily influenced and had not the real interests of the country at heart. He allowed the Pope to make what are known as 'provisions,' *i.e.*, the appointment of foreigners, chiefly Italians, to positions in the English Church. These foreigners drew their salaries but usually did not trouble to visit England to perform their duties. On one occasion the Pope promised to the Romans the next 300 offices that should fall vacant in the English Church. Italians were not the only foreigners who benefited from the weakness of Henry III. The English King's wife was a Frenchwoman, and her friends and relatives (including seven needy uncles!) fell upon England like vultures on their prey. One of these uncles, Peter of Savoy, built the Savoy Palace. This was burnt down over a century later by Wat Tyler's rebels (see Chapter XVI), but the name is still commemorated by the Savoy Hotel.

These things naturally infuriated Englishmen. Henry fell into debt and demanded heavy taxes. Then, to please the Pope, he promised to conquer Sicily from the Pope's enemy,

make his son Edward king of the island, and pay heavily for the privilege. Englishmen determined to resist this latest madcap and expensive scheme.

Simon de Montfort, 'the Good Earl'

The opponents of Henry found a leader in Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. Strange to say, Simon himself was a foreigner—a Frenchman by birth and unbringing. He had also married Henry III's sister. None the less, he opposed the King's misrule and worked for the good of England.

ARMS OF SIMON DE MONTFORT IN WEST-MINSTER ABBEY

In 1258 the barons met Henry in the 'Mad Parliament' at Oxford. The word 'Parliament' really means a place for talking over or discussing affairs, and it was gradually being applied to the Great Council of barons, bishops, abbots, and royal officials that had grown out of the king's feudal council mentioned in Magna Carta. The barons drew up a list of demands known as the Provisions of Oxford, under which foreigners were to be expelled from the country and a committee of fifteen barons was to help Henry in the work of government. Henry gave his consent but soon found an excuse for withdrawing it.

Soon both sides prepared for war. Many of the English barons deserted Simon, as they were jealous of him and disliked his ideas, which were not so selfish as their own. But Simon found plenty of support from the English clergy and the students of Oxford, as well as from the merchants of London and other towns. Many friars, who had begun to arrive in England in Henry III's reign, also supported Simon.

In 1264 the rival armies met at Lewes, in Sussex. The King's son (later Edward I) was successful on his wing and

chased the Londoners who opposed him along the Downs. When he returned he found the main battle had been lost by his father. Simon was master of England, and the King and the Prince were his prisoners.

Simon de Montfort's Parliament (1265)

Simon was ruler of England for only about a year, but during that time he summoned a Parliament which has become very famous in English history. So far Parliaments had consisted of nobles and leading churchmen—the ancestors of our modern House of Lords. Occasionally the opinions of sub-tenants or knights in the shires had been sought, but there had been nothing regular about this practice. Simon's Parliament contained not only two knights from every shire, but, for the first time, two townsmen from every chartered borough. These were the forerunners of the modern House of Commons.

It would be a mistake to think that Simon's Parliament was closely similar to a modern Parliament. The great mass of the people was still not represented, and there was as yet no regular method of choosing the two knights and two townsmen. Although we can see the beginnings of the two houses, for quite a long time they sat together, and knights and townsmen did little more than listen to the debates of nobles and royal ministers. It was not till a century later, in the reign of Edward III, that lords and commons began to separate into two houses. Furthermore, Simon's Parliament was a rebel assembly, summoned by a baron who held the King prisoner. It was not certain (though in actual fact it came to pass) that later kings would follow his example.

Nevertheless, Simon de Montfort had laid the foundations of our two Houses of Parliament, and had shown himself different from the usual selfish baron who thought only of his own class. That is why he was honoured by the common people of England and why, long after his death, tales were

told in cottage and inn of 'the good earl' who had championed the people of England.

The End of Henry III's Reign

In 1265 Prince Edward escaped from his guards, collected an army, and attacked Simon. The opposing forces met at Evesham. Simon's troops were weary with marching, but were hemmed in by Edward's army and the River Avon, and so had to give battle. Simon's army was defeated, and its leader was slain. From now till Henry III's death in 1272 the work of government was left more and more in the capable hands of Prince Edward, who was fast learning the lessons that were to make him into one of England's greatest kings, a worthy descendant of William I and Henry II.

Edward I and Parliament

Edward I occasionally followed the example of Simon de Montfort of summoning representatives of the shires and towns to attend his Parliaments. He found it convenient to let them hear in person the King's financial needs, as they were then more willing to arrange for the collection of taxes. He also found it useful to hear any complaints they had to make about the government of their districts or the misdeeds of local officials. These complaints were usually in the form of petitions, and later developed into the 'bills' introduced by the House of Commons to alter the law of the land.

In 1295 Edward desired money and the support of his subjects for his wars in France, Wales, and Scotland. He summoned a Parliament and ordered his sheriffs to see that the towns and shires elected two representatives each to attend it. This Parliament became the model for later Parliaments, and is known in history as the Model Parliament. With it Edward, King of England, made the work of Simon, the rebel earl, part of the ordinary machinery of government.

In 1297, during Edward's absence abroad, the English nobles and merchants forced the King's representatives to

PARLIAMENT OF EDWARD I

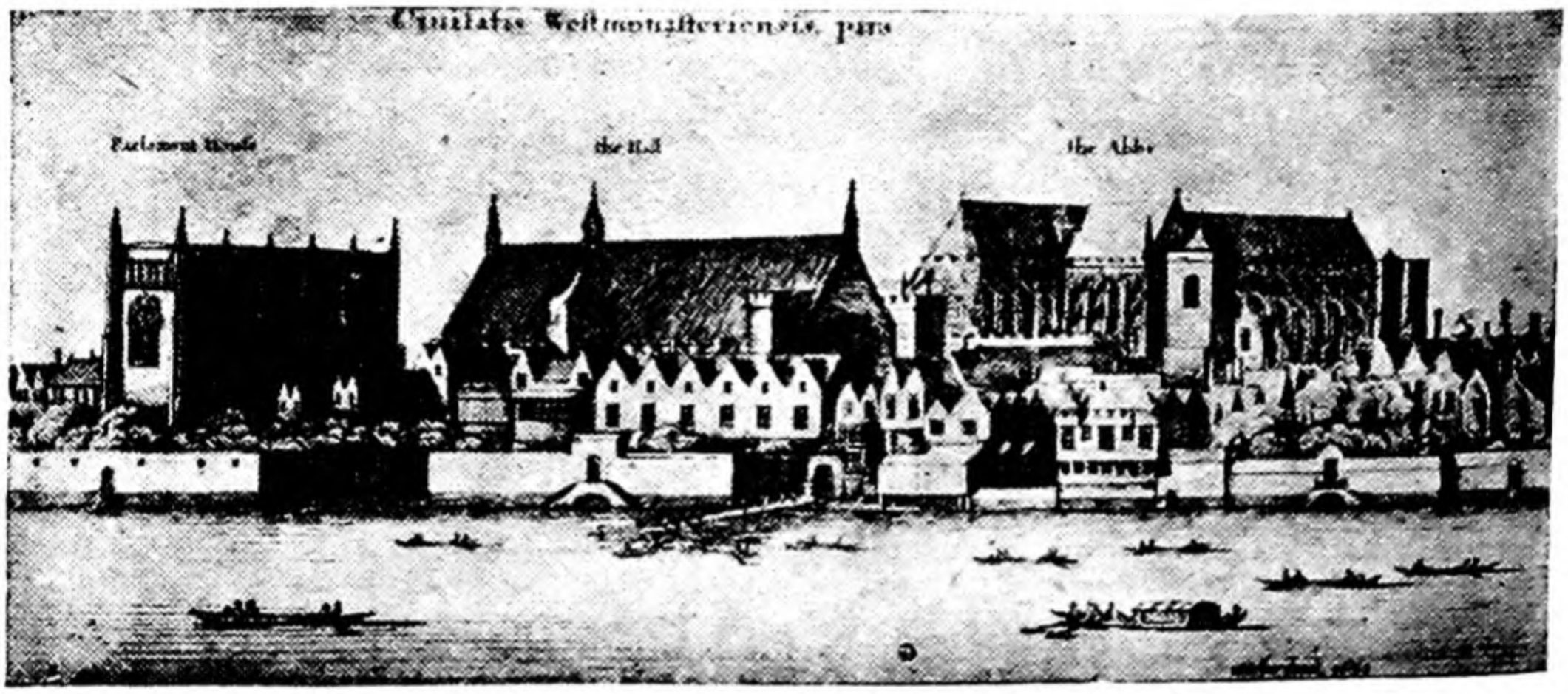
The earliest known representation of Parliament. In the centre is the King; on his right is Alexander III of Scotland; on his left is Prince Llewelyn of Wales. On the King's extreme right and left are the Archbishops of York and Canterbury respectively. On the left of the picture are the bishops and abbots; on the right are the barons. In the centre sitting on 'woolsacks,' are the Chancellor and the judges. To this early Parliament, summoned twenty years before the Model Parliament, the knights and burgesses had not been invited.

confirm the charters (including Magna Carta) between king and nation. To this Confirmation of the Charters was added the important provision that no tax, apart from those customarily levied, should be imposed without the consent

of Parliament. This was not always kept, but it was an important declaration to have been made so early in the history of Parliament.

Edward I, 'The English Justinian'

Edward was a great lawgiver and has been compared with the Roman Emperor Justinian. Like Henry II, he aimed at limiting the power of the great barons and of the Church.



WHERE PARLIAMENT MET

After the end of the thirteenth century the Parliament usually assembled in or near the old Palace of Westminster, of which only Westminster Hall now remains. Till 1547 the Commons met in the chapter-house or the refectory of Westminster Abbey; after that date they met in St Stephen's Chapel (the large building on the left). Early meetings of the Great Council were held in Westminster Hall; later on the Lords met in another room of the palace. St Stephen's Chapel was burned down in 1834, and the building of the present Houses of Parliament was begun six years later.

In 1278 he attacked the barons' law-courts. Officers were sent round the country to ask by what right (*quo warranto*) each noble held his court. This aroused much opposition, one baron producing a rusty sword and declaring that his ancestors had won their right by means of that. Edward wisely gave way and allowed private courts more than a hundred years old to continue; but his action prevented the growth of new private courts.

In the following year the Statute of Mortmain forbade the Church to acquire fresh land without the king's special permission. People often gave or left large estates to the Church. Under the 'dead hand' (*mort main*) of the Church

these estates paid fewer feudal dues to the king, and the king could never hope to obtain them back. This was because the Church was an institution that went on without change; unlike other tenants, it was never a minor, it never married, and it never died with or without heirs.

In 1285 the Statute of Winchester was passed. This revived Henry II's Assize of Arms, and made the country safer by ordering criminals to be promptly chased, and towns to appoint watches and constables to bring suspected persons before local 'conservators of the peace.' These latter were the forerunners of our modern Justices of the Peace, or magistrates.

Two other laws dealt with the ownership of land. The first began the system known as entail, by which a landowner who was given land for himself and his heirs was forbidden to sell any of his land but had to keep it entire for his successor. The second, known as *Quia Emptores*, enacted that when a tenant parted with some of his land, the new sub-tenant owed homage and feudal service not to the tenant, but to the tenant's overlord. This act helped to undermine feudalism. It prevented the growth of complicated feudal relationships, and, seeing that the king was the biggest landowner in the country, it increased the number of tenants-in-chief who owed him direct homage.

These famous laws of Edward I were not passed by Parliament as our modern laws are, for although Parliament was growing, it was not yet very strong or experienced. It was still the king, with the advice of his ministers, who thought out and enacted laws.

Edward I and Great Britain

Edward was a great warrior king as well as a great lawgiver. It was he who defeated Llewelyn of Wales and brought the Welsh under English rule. He tried likewise to conquer Scotland, but although he won battles and hunted to death the Scotch leader, William Wallace, he

never succeeded in this part of his work. The story of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland really deserves a chapter to itself.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Why was the loss of most of the Angevin Empire under John (*a*) considered a disaster at the time, (*b*) good for England in the long run?

2. What did two important clauses of Magna Carta state? Explain carefully the importance of the Charter.

3. Show the good and the bad side of the Pope's interference in English affairs under John and Henry III.

4. Explain the meaning of the word 'Parliament.' What was the origin of the two Houses of Parliament?

5. How did a thirteenth-century Parliament (*a*) resemble, (*b*) differ from, a modern Parliament?

CHAPTER XV

THE BRITISH ISLES

English Kings

Plantagenets	Edward I	(1272–1307)
	Edward II	(1307–1327)

The British Isles in the Middle Ages

ENGLAND, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland were not so united in the Middle Ages as they are at the present day. Wales, Scotland, and Ireland were inhabited in the main by various Celtic tribes, and were not regarded by English kings as of such importance as their Continental possessions. Normans and early Plantagenets spent much time in defending Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine against the French King. The later Plantagenets and Lancastrians were intent, during the Hundred Years' War, on asserting their claim to the French throne. It was only the middle Plantagenets, and in particular Edward I, who were able to devote much time to the neighbouring countries in our own islands.

It is not surprising, therefore, that by the end of the Middle Ages only Wales had been conquered by England. The conquest of Scotland was tried but failed; the conquest of Ireland was too fitful to make much permanent impression, and English influence was confined to a small district round Dublin.

I. IRELAND

England and Ireland in the Middle Ages

The Romans had not attempted to conquer Ireland, which had been left in the hands of the disunited Celtic tribes. About the year 450 St Patrick had introduced Celtic Christianity to Ireland, but the Celtic Christians had not

the Roman gift of organization and had done little to make Ireland united. In the ninth century the Danes ravaged the Irish coasts and founded Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and Waterford.

The first English king to give much attention to Ireland was Henry II. The Lord of Leinster, Dermot, invited Henry II to come over and settle a quarrel between Dermot and his subjects. Henry was too busy in France, but he encouraged some of his Norman knights under the Earl of Pembroke, or 'Strongbow,' to cross over. Strongbow's family had already carved out estates in Wales, and many of his followers were Norman-Welsh knights supported by Welsh archers. The wild Irish tribesmen and the Danish townsmen were unable to withstand their better-armed opponents, and Strongbow, on Dermot's death, became Earl of Leinster. The English-born Pope, Adrian IV, authorized Henry to make himself overlord of Ireland, hoping thereby to bring the Irish Church more under his control. Soon after Becket's death Henry crossed to Ireland, where most of the Irish chiefs acknowledged him as king. Later Henry's son, John, was sent to Ireland to represent the King; but John quarrelled with both Normans and Irish, much as later on he quarrelled with the Pope and the English barons, and his mission was unsuccessful.

Only one other king, Richard II, visited Ireland during the rest of the Middle Ages. English authority was very shadowy, and Ireland was split roughly into three parts. The district round Dublin, known as the Pale, was the only place where English influence was strong; here justice was administered as in an English shire. In the centre of Ireland the descendants of the Norman adventurers soon became little different from the Irish themselves, while in the extreme west Irish tribes under their local chiefs pursued their warlike habits undisturbed.

Ireland remained a backward country throughout the Middle Ages, and for long after. There were practically no

industries and little settled agriculture. Cattle-rearing and cattle-lifting were among the chief occupations. In the early days of Celtic Christianity Ireland had been a centre of learning and culture; but she had long since lost that distinction, and by the end of the Middle Ages she was one of the very few countries of Europe with no university of her own.

II. WALES

Wales before Edward I

During the Anglo-Saxon invasions of England many of the ancient Britons had fled to the mountainous north and west. The battles of Deorham (577) and Chester (613) (see p. 45) had divided the Welsh into three parts—those in the extreme north-west, those in the extreme south-west, and those in the centre (or Wales). The first two parts gradually became part of England, but Wales for long remained independent.

The Normans took strong measures to keep the Welsh in check. William the Conqueror placed strong men at the three key places of Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford. Chester was part of the County Palatine, and its warlike ruler, Hugh Lupus, or the Wolf, was given exceptional powers to drive back the Welsh. Later Norman kings encouraged their barons to fight the Welsh and carve out estates, called 'marches,' or borderlands, for themselves. This also served the useful purpose of keeping the barons occupied. At one time there were reckoned to be 143 'Marcher Lords,' whose castle-studded marches extended far into Wales, leaving untouched only the mountainous district of Snowdonia in the north. This region was called the Principality of Gwynedd.

Even in many of the marches English rule was very insecure. When the kings of England or the Marcher Lords were weak, down would swoop the wild Welsh tribesmen to plunder and lay waste the rich valleys, only to retire

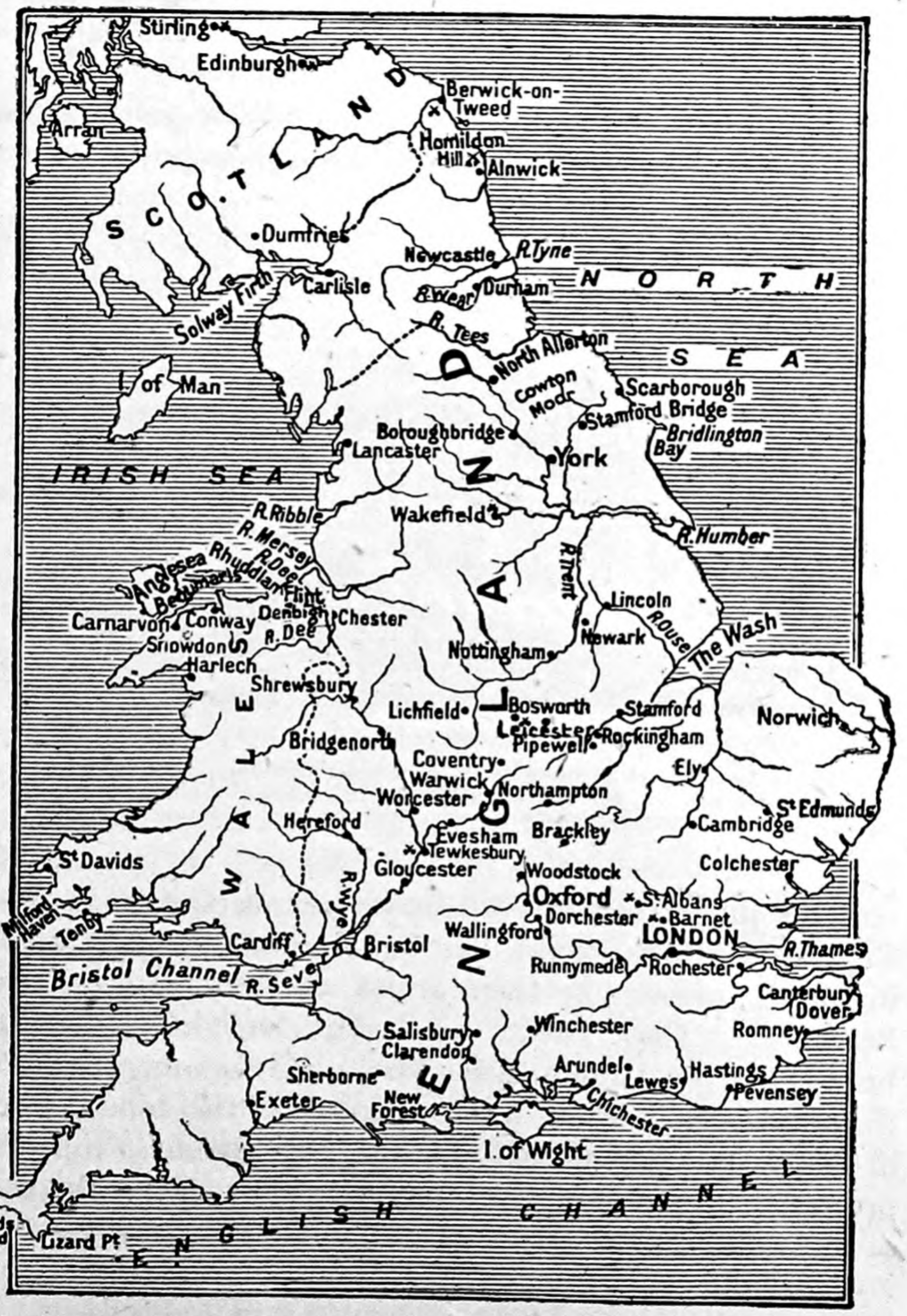
quickly into their mountain strongholds, where heavily armoured or mounted knights were unable to pursue them. It was from the Welsh that the English learned the use of the long-bow—the weapon which afterwards became distinctively English and which produced the victories against France in the fourteenth century. In the reign of King John a powerful Welsh prince of Gwynedd, named Llewelyn, joined the barons against the king. Fifty years later another Llewelyn, grandson of the first, joined Simon de Montfort's party against Henry III. This second Llewelyn was more warlike and ambitious than his grandfather. Both Simon and Henry III recognized him as prince over all Wales, though he remained the vassal of England. Such was the state of affairs when Edward I ascended the English throne.

Edward I's Conquest of Wales

Llewelyn refused to attend Edward's coronation or do homage for Wales. Edward determined to stamp out Welsh independence, and in 1277 he invaded north Wales from Chester. Llewelyn retreated to the wild region of Snowdonia, thinking himself safe. Edward took strong measures. His engineers cleared roads through the dense Welsh forests; his fleet seized Anglesey, and the cornfields meant to feed Llewelyn's men fed Edward's army instead. The Welsh were starved into surrender, and Llewelyn was forced to do homage for the lands that were left to him.

Edward unwisely tried to introduce English laws and customs, and in 1282 Llewelyn was persuaded by his brother, David, to revolt again. Soon Llewelyn was slain and David executed. The Statute of Wales (1284) divided Snowdonia into the counties of Anglesey, Caernarvon, and Merioneth; other Welsh counties were reorganized. English laws were administered in the new shire courts, but the Welsh were left with many of their old customs.

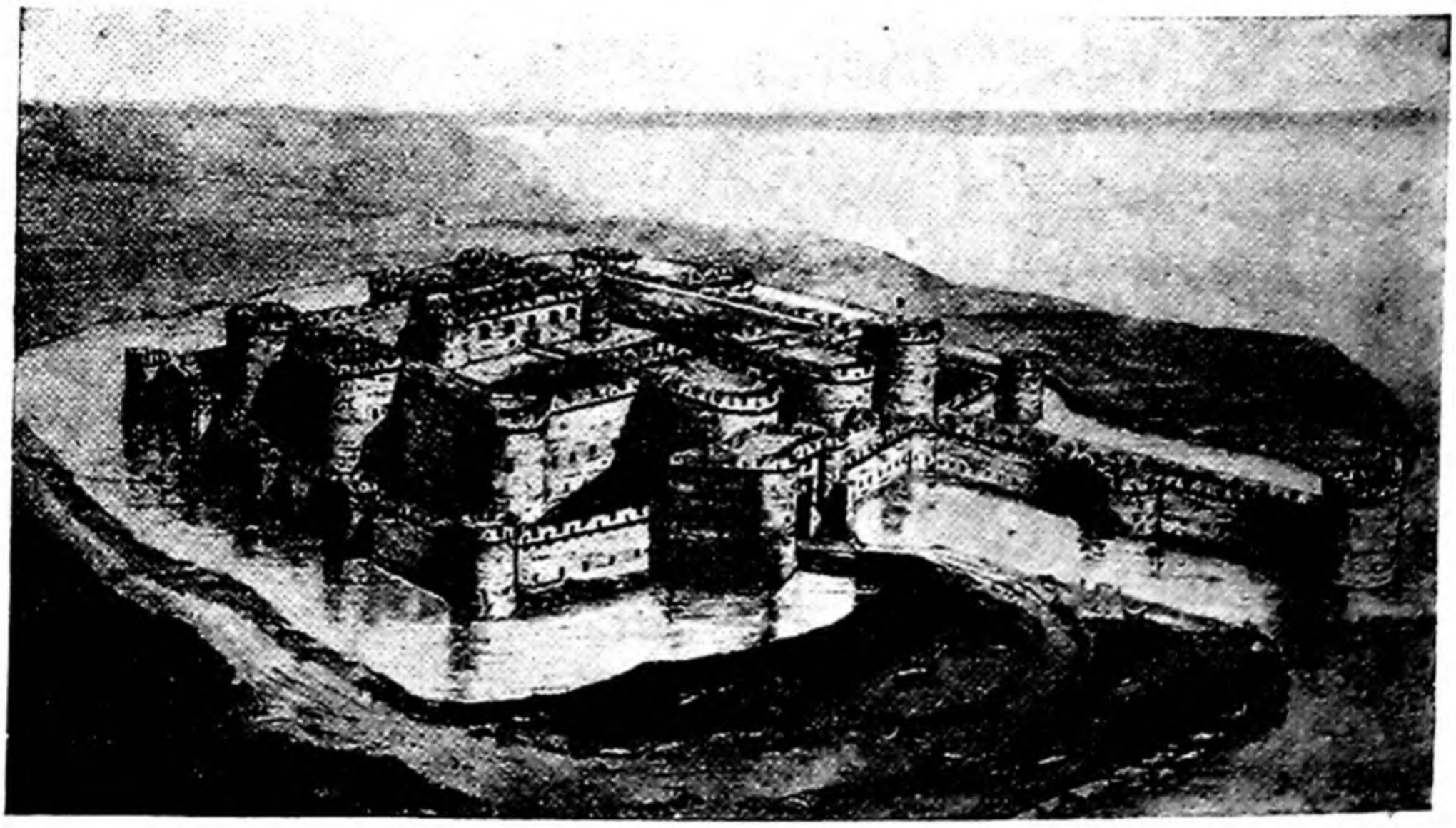
The Welsh were without a prince—but not for long. In 1284 a son was born to Edward at Caernarvon Castle.



ENGLAND AND WALES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Edward jokingly showed the baby to the Welsh as "a prince who could not speak a word of English." This baby—the future Edward II—was the first Prince of Wales.

Edward took strong measures to keep Wales in subjection. He allowed the Marcher Lords to keep their powers, but he



BEAUMARIS CASTLE

(Reconstructed by Charles H. Ashdown.)

The castle was built by Edward I in 1295 for the purpose of checking the Welsh chieftains who used Anglesey as a rendezvous from which they could harass the mainland.

sent his judges into the country and introduced as much English law as he could. He built massive stone castles at important places like Caernarvon, Conway, Harlech, and Beaumaris. These castles marked the height of defensive building in the Middle Ages. With their surrounding moat, their inner and outer walls, pierced at the top to allow defenders to pour molten lead on their enemies, and their projecting towers enabling archers to shoot along the sides of the walls as well as straight in front of them, they were —before the age of gunpowder—almost impregnable.

Wales after Edward I

Never again was Wales independent. For long it was subject to outbreaks of lawlessness, either from Welsh tribes

or from feudal Marcher Lords. A century after Edward I's reign a Welsh patriot, Owen Glendower, tried unsuccessfully to defy the rule of Henry IV, the first Lancastrian. In the middle of the fifteenth century Welsh Marcher Lords took part in the Wars of the Roses, hoping in the turmoil to increase their powers. But their hopes were dashed in 1485 when Henry Tudor, himself the grandson of a Welsh landowner, Owen Tudor, defeated Richard III at Bosworth, and made himself king as Henry VII. The second Tudor king, Henry VIII, abolished the Marcher Lordships, divided Wales into counties, and allowed the Welsh to send members to the English Parliament.

III. SCOTLAND

Scotland before Edward I

In Roman times Scotland was inhabited by a Celtic race known as the Picts. During the Dark Ages other races invaded and settled in Scotland. First came another Celtic race, the Scots from north-eastern Ireland, who crossed the sea and settled in modern Argyll. Soon afterwards many Angles colonized south-eastern Scotland in the same way as they colonized eastern England. During the Anglo-Saxon invasions many British fled north and joined their Celtic brethren in the south-west of Scotland.

These various races, mainly Celtic in origin, were in 844 united under the strong rule of Kenneth Macalpine, but soon afterwards a fresh race came to disrupt the growing kingdom and trouble its inhabitants. These were the Danes, who ravaged the coasts and held many of the Scottish islands for several centuries.

The eleventh century, which saw England united under William the Conqueror, also saw renewed attempts to unite and strengthen Scotland under her native kings. In 1034 Duncan (who figures in Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*) made

himself king of a more or less united Scotland. Six years later he was slain by Macbeth, who in his turn was slain by Duncan's son, Malcolm.

Malcolm (1057–1093) had been an exile in England during Edward the Confessor's reign. He introduced many English customs into Scotland, and took as his second wife an English princess. The strong measures taken by William the Conqueror to put down revolts in the north of England caused many English to flee across the border, thus still further increasing the English element in the south of Scotland. Malcolm's son, David I (1124–1153), carried on his father's policy. He tried to seize parts of northern England during the anarchy of Stephen's reign, but was defeated at the Battle of the Standard (1138). Nevertheless he introduced feudal ideas and Norman customs into the Scottish Lowlands. He gave feudal estates to his barons; he organized the Church, which still retained traces of its Celtic origin, into parishes; he founded beautiful abbeys like Melrose and Holyrood.

At different times, as, for instance, during Henry II's reign, the kings of Scotland had been obliged to acknowledge English overlordship, but they were still really independent. By the time of Edward I Scotland was a country of two distinct halves. The northern half, the Highlands, was primitive, Celtic, and tribal; the southern half, the Lowlands, was more prosperous, largely Anglo-Norman in its customs and speech, and feudal.

Edward I, 'The Hammer of the Scots'

In 1286 Alexander III of Scotland was carried over a sea-cliff by his horse. His heir was his young granddaughter, Margaret, known as the 'Maid of Norway.' Edward I persuaded the Scottish nobles to agree to a marriage between Margaret and Edward's son, the first Prince of Wales. This would have united the crowns of England and Scotland 300 years before it actually came to pass, but Margaret died

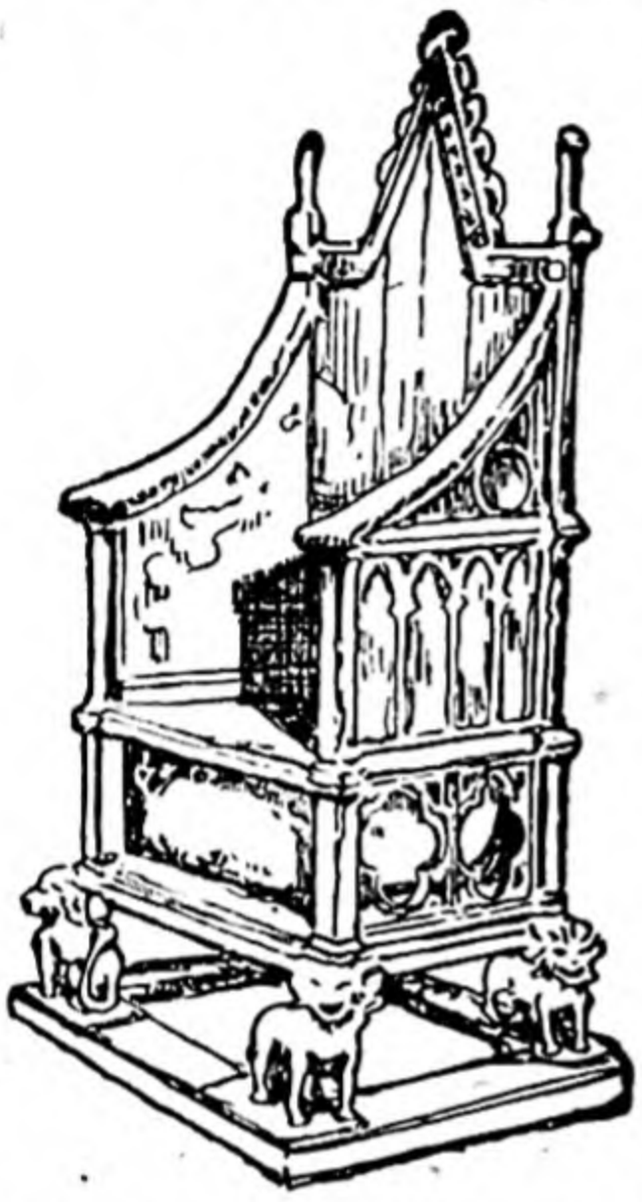
on the voyage from Norway to Scotland, and Edward's plans were upset (1290).

Edward now, as overlord of Scotland, claimed the right

of deciding between the many claimants to the throne, who agreed that

> the noble Prince Edward, by grace of God King of England, having informed us with good and sufficient reasons that to him belongs the sovereign lordship of the land;
>
> We therefore promise that we will maintain his decision, and that he shall enjoy the realm to whom it shall be adjudged before him.

The two chief claimants were John Balliol (whose father and mother founded Balliol College, Oxford) and Robert Bruce. In 1292 Edward decided in favour of Balliol, who did him homage. But now Edward acted foolishly. He treated Balliol like a puppet, and ordered Scottish law-cases to be tried in London. Balliol repudiated his oaths to Edward and formed an alliance with the King of France, who was attacking Gascony. This was too much for Edward. In 1296 he invaded Scotland, deposed Balliol, and made himself king. To mark the end of Scottish independence, he carried away from Scone the 'stone of destiny.' For centuries Scottish kings had been crowned on this stone, which legend said was the one upon which Jacob in the Old Testament had laid his head. Edward placed the stone under the English coronation chair at Westminster Abbey, where it still rests.



CORONATION CHAIR, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Every English ruler since Edward I has been crowned in this oak chair. Under the seat is the famous Stone of Scone.

Then a new leader arose to throw off the English rule. This was Sir William Wallace, a knight who had been outlawed for attacking an Englishman. In 1297 Wallace inflicted a severe defeat upon the English army that Edward had left behind. The Scottish were posted on the high ground above Stirling Bridge when the English army began to cross. Wallace allowed half the English to cross and then charged down and routed them. The rest of the English fled, and their leader barely escaped capture.

In the following year (1298) Edward himself appeared in Scotland at the head of an army. He met Wallace at Falkirk. The battle was long and fierce. At length the ranks of stout Scottish spearmen were broken by the English archers. The English cavalry charged into the gaps thus made and routed the Scots. This first great victory of the English long-bowmen

finished the military career of Wallace, but Scotland was not yet beaten. Rebellions broke out year after year till 1305, when every Scottish castle was manned by English troops and Wallace himself had been betrayed and hanged as a traitor.

Robert Bruce

Once more when all seemed lost a new champion arose. This was Robert Bruce, grandson of the claimant to the Scottish throne in 1290. Bruce slew his own cousin and rival, John Comyn, in the Grey Friars' Convent at Dumfries, and as a result he was outlawed and excommunicated. Like Wallace, he was forced by his position to fight for his life and the crown of Scotland at one and the same time. In 1306 he was crowned at Scone, but was soon afterwards defeated by the English and forced to take refuge on an island. Bruce did not despair. It was at this point that, according to the old story, his determination was roused by the sight of a spider trying again and again to weave its web. He collected more men and again threatened the English. Edward I was staying at the monastery of Lanercost, near Carlisle. He set off, old and infirm, for the Scottish frontier once more. But he was destined not to cross swords with Bruce. Four days later at Burgh-on-Sands the great King died (1307).

Thus passed England's greatest king since Henry II. Founder of the English Parliament, reformer of English laws, conqueror of Wales, hammer of the Scots—these were his titles to fame. His wars were often cruel and bloodthirsty; his actions often rash. But he was the only English king in the Middle Ages who turned his full attention to the problems of our own island and refused to be dazzled by the false glamour of French conquests.

Edward I was succeeded by his son, Edward II, a vain and worthless person who failed in everything he did. The new King gave up the plan of invading Scotland and allowed

Bruce to capture most of the English castles. At length, in 1314, Stirling Castle, the last stronghold in English hands, was threatened. Edward II roused himself and marched to its relief. Bruce chose his position between the River Forth and its tributary, the Bannock Burn, with great skill. Edward crossed the Bannock Burn and took up his position on a marshy stretch between the Forth and its tributary. This was a foolish thing to do, because he was now hemmed in by the two rivers and could not use his army, three times as large as the Scots, to the best advantage. Bruce charged the English cavalry before they could get into open country or obtain the support of their archers. The result was a crushing defeat for Edward, who himself only escaped by hard riding to the coast, where he took ship to England (1314).

The Tragedy of Edward II

Edward was no more successful in England than in Scotland. He fell under the influence of an insolent Gascon, called Piers Gaveston. The barons formed a committee, called the Lords Ordainers, against the King, and forced him to dismiss Gaveston. This Edward did, but, finding life empty without his crony, soon recalled him. The barons seized Gaveston and had him stabbed to death (1312).

Edward now took two new favourites, the Despensers (father and son). But the disaster at Bannockburn in 1314 once more weakened his authority, and the barons, under the King's own cousin, Thomas of Lancaster, were able to seize power. The country was no better off under the selfish barons than under the weak king. Civil war broke out, and Edward was forced to dismiss the Despensers. In 1322 Edward's fortunes changed; he defeated the barons, executed Thomas of Lancaster, and recalled the Despensers.

The King's favourites soon created fresh discontent, and even his own queen, Isabella, turned against him. She fled to France (where her brother was the King) and joined

forces with a rebellious Marcher Lord called Roger Mortimer. Together they invaded England. They caught and hanged the Despensers, deposed Edward II, and proclaimed the young prince King as Edward III (1327). In the following year the dethroned king was murdered in a dungeon in Berkeley Castle, in Gloucestershire.

Scottish Independence secured

During the years following Bannockburn Bruce had destroyed the last remnants of English rule in Scotland, and had even on many occasions crossed the border and terrorized the northern English counties. One of Edward III's first acts was to recognize the independence of Scotland by the Treaty of Northampton (1328). The death of Bruce in the following year tempted Edward to renew the struggle. A victory was gained over the Scots at Halidon Hill in 1333, and as a result Berwick became an English town. But occasional victories were not sufficient to subdue the Scots, and in 1341 Edward III, whose ambitions had now turned southward to France, recognized Scottish independence. Border warfare lasted throughout the Middle Ages, and in the English struggle against France in the Hundred Years' War the Scots were always found on the side of the French.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What reasons do you think led English kings in the Middle Ages to pay more attention to France than to the neighbouring countries in our own islands?

2. Tell the story of Edward I's conquest of Wales.

3. Show how (*a*) William Wallace, (*b*) Robert Bruce, were able to revive Scottish forces when all seemed lost.

4. Why do you think it was so difficult for England to subdue Scotland in the Middle Ages?

5. Write notes on: the Pale, Marcher Lords, the Prince of Wales, the Maid of Norway, the 'stone of destiny'.

CHAPTER XVI

ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

English Kings

Plantagenets	Edward III	(1327–1377)
	Richard II	(1377–1399)

France under the Early Capetians

We saw in Chapter VI how the last of the descendants of Charlemagne in France was succeeded in 987 by Hugh Capet. Capetian kings ruled in France till 1328.

The Capetians proved a very strong line of kings—and they had need to be! They were also blessed with long reigns: from 987 to 1328 there were only fourteen kings, with an average reign of over twenty-four years. Their territory was confined to a small stretch of country reaching from Paris on the Seine to Orleans on the Loire. All round were the provinces of powerful tenants-in-chief, who held far more of France than the king himself. In theory they were subordinate to the king, but in practice they were usually independent, rendering allegiance only when forced. The Capetians aimed at increasing their own power and possessions as much as possible and thus unifying France. Their early efforts met with little success, but by the end of the Middle Ages they had succeeded.

In 1066 William of Normandy, a vassal of the French King, conquered England and became more powerful than his master. In the reign of our King Stephen the French King, Louis VII, obtained the extensive Duchy of Aquitaine by his marriage to the heiress, Eleanor of Aquitaine. But Louis had no son to succeed him; he quarrelled with his wife and ended by divorcing her. This lost him Aquitaine;

but worse was to follow. Eleanor married Henry, Count of Anjou, the King's most dangerous vassal. Soon afterwards this same Henry became King of England as Henry II, and thus added Normandy to his French possessions. Thus was built up the powerful Angevin Empire (see Chapter XIII).

Louis's action, which had seemed to wreck the royal power, turned out by a fortunate chance to be the best in the end. His second wife bore him a son, Philip Augustus, named the 'God-given' as a token of gratitude. This son proved one of the greatest of French kings.

Philip Augustus (1180–1223)

The reign of Philip Augustus covered a troubled period in English history—the end of Henry II's reign, when Henry's sons rebelled against their father; the long absence of Richard I on his Crusade; the quarrels of King John with the Pope and his English subjects; and finally the early years of the boy King, Henry III. Philip Augustus took full advantage of these troubles (many of which he encouraged himself) to extend his power.

In 1204, after John had refused to do homage, the French King seized Normandy. In the next two years Philip obtained all the English lands north of the Loire—Anjou, Touraine, and Maine—and even part of Poitou, south of the Loire. "Let him alone!" exclaimed the sluggard John; "some day I will win back all he has taken." But it was not to be. The Angevin Empire was broken up, and English power was confined to Aquitaine, in the south-west.

Ten years later a coalition of Philip's enemies tried to crush him. John invaded France, while in the north-east another army under the Emperor and the Count of Flanders (who had himself lost valuable possessions) attacked Philip. Philip routed his foes at Bouvines in 1214, and the Count of Flanders was taken in chains to Paris. Bouvines made

Philip's conquests permanent; in England it discredited John and led to Magna Carta.

Philip Augustus proved an able ruler as well as a successful soldier. He put down the power of the rebellious barons and disloyal officials; he encouraged the lesser tenants and the growing towns, and trained a new class of officials who faithfully carried out his will. He protected students and encouraged the growing University of Paris. As a thanksgiving for his victory at Bouvines he built one of the glories of Gothic architecture, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame at Paris.

The Later Capetians

Philip was succeeded by other able rulers. His grandson, Louis IX (1226–1270), was the most famous ruler of his age. He was a man of great uprightness of character and honesty, who tried his best to carry out the teachings of the Christian Church, which all professed but so few practised. His reputation for justice spread throughout Christendom, and at one time he was appealed to in the quarrel between Henry III of England and the barons. Louis dressed plainly, lived simply, and rose at midnight and in the early hours of the morning for the services of the Church. But he was no weakling. He added lands in the south of France to the royal possessions. He limited the baronial power of issuing coins, and ordered his judges to refuse presents and honours. He died, as he would have wished, on a Crusade against the infidels in north Africa, and was later made a saint.

Philip IV ('the Fair'), the grandson of Saint Louis, was a very different man. His reign (1285–1314) corresponds roughly with that of our Edward I. Philip the Fair was cruel, greedy, and unscrupulous. But he was a successful ruler. He abolished many differences between the various laws and customs of the royal possessions, and he trained a class of capable administrators. Like his contemporary in England, he encouraged the growth of Parliament, or the

States-General, as it was called in France. This body consisted of three estates—the clergy, nobles, and citizens. Unfortunately for France, these estates never worked together as closely as the two English Houses; nor did they ever obtain so much power.

Philip the Fair quarrelled very violently with the Pope, and in 1305 he secured the election of a Frenchman to the Papal chair. The new Pope soon left Rome to live at Avignon, a city on the Rhône just outside the boundary of France at that time. For nearly seventy years (1309–1378) the Popes lived at Avignon. During this period of the 'Babylonish Captivity' the Popes lost much of the respect of Christendom. England, in particular, when she declared war on France, regarded these Popes under French influence as almost part of her national enemy.

In 1314 Philip died. He was succeeded in turn by his three sons. When the last of these died without heirs in 1328, a new branch of the French royal family, the Valois, ascended the throne. The accession of the Valois was soon contested by Edward III of England, and in 1337 the Hundred Years' War broke out.

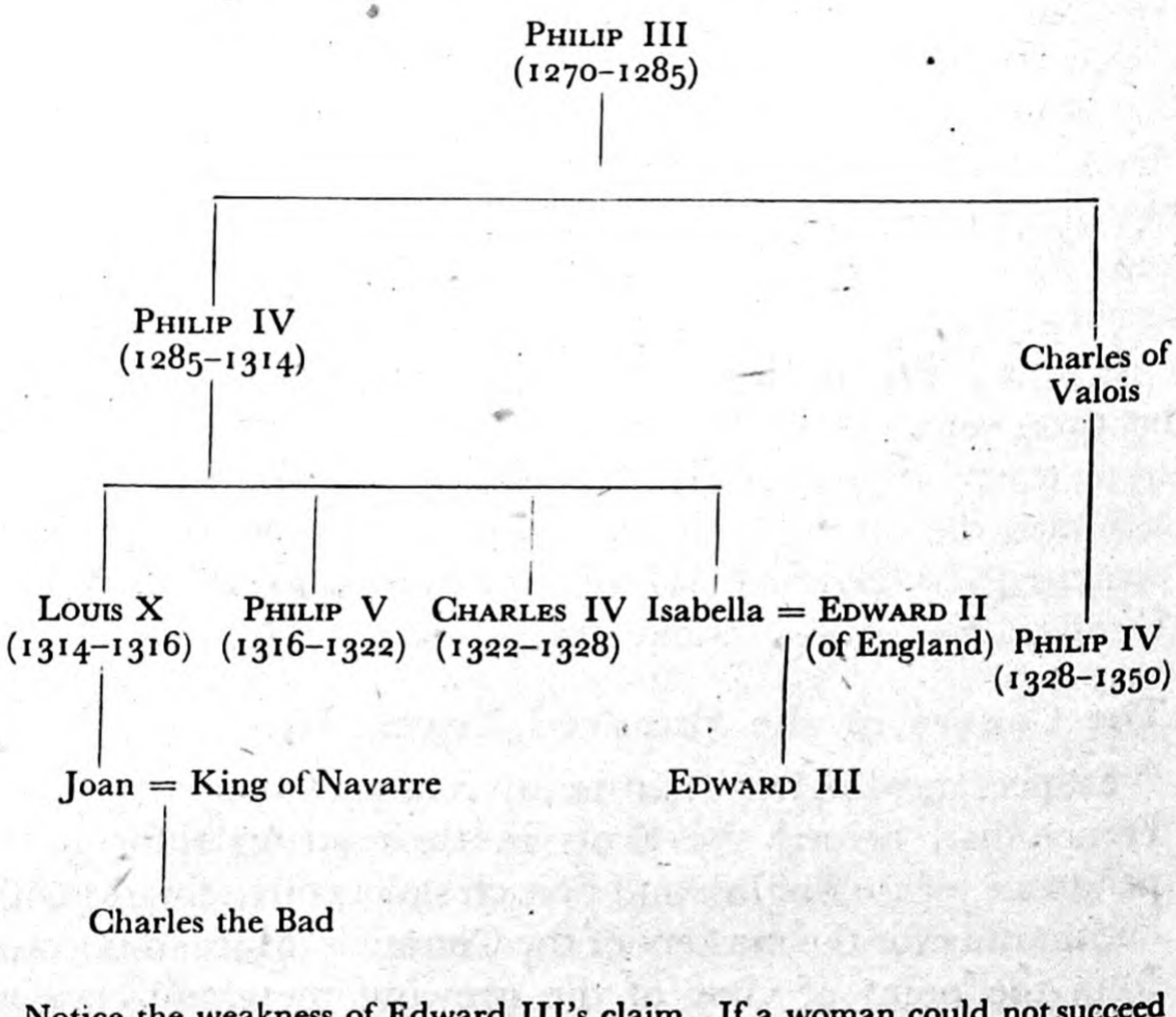
The Causes of the Hundred Years' War

France and England had many reasons for enmity. The French had helped the Scots in their struggle for independence, while English and French sailors often fought with one another for the mastery of the Channel. More important from the point of view of the growing merchant-class of England was the interference of France with our wool-trade with Flanders. The Flemings, who had expelled their Count, were attacked by the King of France, the Count's overlord. England backed up the wealthy Flemish merchants, whose purchases of English wool brought prosperity to our country, and, incidentally, large taxes to the king's coffers.

The King of France accused Edward III (who was a vassal of the French King for his French possessions) of acting

EDWARD III'S CLAIM TO THE FRENCH THRONE

(Kings in capital letters)



Notice the weakness of Edward III's claim. If a woman could not succeed to the throne, but could transmit a claim, there was still Charles the Bad of Navarre with a superior claim to Edward's.

disloyally. Here we come to the real cause of the struggle. The King of England still held Guienne in south-west France—the remnant of the once vast Angevin Empire. The King of France wished to rule over all his country, with more justice than Edward I's desire to rule over Wales and Scotland.

To please the Flemings and to make his war against his overlord appear more lawful, Edward III laid claim to the French throne. Edward's mother was a daughter of Philip the Fair, so that Edward was more closely related to the Capetians than was the new King, Philip of Valois. But the French had a law, called the Salic Law, which said that a woman could not succeed to the throne. Edward denied that this meant that she could not transmit a claim to the throne, and so, in the words of the chronicler, Sir John Froissart, "the King quartered the arms of France with England, and from thenceforth took on him the name of the King of France." Thus French lilies and English lions appeared on the same shield, and for long afterwards our kings styled themselves Kings of France as well as of England.

Edward's claim was put forward in 1337, and this marked the commencement of the so-called Hundred Years' War, which lasted with intervals till 1453. In the first part of the war Edward III and his son, the Black Prince, won the great victories of Crécy (1346) and Poitiers (1356). In the next century Henry V revived the war and won the Battle of Agincourt (1415); but in the reign of his son, Henry VI, the French under Joan of Arc drove the English from all their possessions except Calais.

The First Ten Years

Before Edward could invade France he had to obtain command of the sea. This he did at the Battle of Sluys (1340). This naval victory was very different from later sea-fights. The wooden ships stood high in the water and were propelled by a single square sail. At each end was a

small raised castle where archers commanded a view of the enemy decks, but the main fighting was done by boarding-parties after the ships had been grappled together.

THE BATTLE OF SLUYS

In 1346 Edward crossed to Normandy and proceeded to plunder and lay waste northern France. He was overtaken by the French army at Crécy. The English were outnumbered by about three to one, but by the end of a hot, sultry August day nearly 2000 French nobles lay dead on the battlefield. Among the dead was the blind King of Bohemia. Legend relates that it was from this dead King's crest that the Black Prince obtained the symbol of the three ostrich-feathers with the motto "*Ich dien*" ("I serve"); but this legend has been shown to have no foundation.

The startling English victory at Crécy was mainly due to the superiority of the English long-bow. The French had been supported by cross-bowmen from Genoa, in Italy, but these could only shoot one arrow to an Englishman's three or four, and even then not so far. Only at one point in the English line, where the Black Prince commanded, had there been any danger. Edward III, who was posted with the reserves near a windmill, was asked to send help.

A GENOESE CROSS-BOWMAN

Then the King said, "Is my son dead, or hurt, or on the earth felled?" "No, sir," quoth the knight, "but he is hardly matched; wherefore he hath need of your aid." "Well," said the King, "return to him and to them that sent you hither, and say to them that they send no more to me for any adventure that falleth, as long as my son is alive; and also say to them that they suffer him this day to win his spurs."[1]

AN ENGLISH ARCHER

The victory at Crécy encouraged Edward in his plan of prohibiting in England "handball, football, or hockey; coursing and cock-fighting, or other such idle games," so that more time could be given to archery. Many English freemen, anxious for plunder or ransoms, crossed to France, and the English armies of knights, yeomen, and burghers differed very much from the feudal and mercenary levies of the King of France.

[1] Froissart's *Chronicle*.

After Crécy Edward marched on Calais, which he captured in 1347. Calais soon became a centre for the English woollen trade and was the only French town to remain in English hands when the war was finally over.

The Black Death (1348–1349)

Men's thoughts were soon turned from killing one another by a terrible plague that invaded Europe from the east. Till a century ago plague was a frequent visitor, but the Black Death in the fourteenth century was the worst in all history.

In August, 1348, it reached Dorsetshire, whence it spread throughout England, reaching London in November of the same year. People who caught it came out in dark purple patches and died very quickly. A chronicler says:

> It smote between morning and noon a very great number of people in perfect health, and rid them of this mortal life. None of those whom it willed to die, did it suffer to live more than three or four days at the most, without any regarding of persons, with the exception perhaps of a few rich.

In many places there were so few priests left that the Pope gave permission for laymen to minister to the dying. It is impossible to say with accuracy how many perished, but between one-third and one-half of England's population of four millions must have died. Not till two centuries later did the population reach its previous figure.

The Effects of the Black Death

Far-reaching effects were produced upon the life of the country. "The cattle roamed masterless over the countryside, and crops rotted in the fields for lack of hands to reap them." The result was a rise in prices.

A very serious shortage of labour also occurred. For half a century before the Black Death many villeins had been able to change their labour-services into money-rents, *i.e.*,

they were allowed to pay a money-rent instead of working two or three days a week on the lord's demesne. This was known as 'commuting,' or changing their services. With the money the lord could hire labourers whose work would be more reliable than that of the unwilling villeins, while the latter were able to devote more of their time to their own strips. The villeins who had thus become free came to be called copyholders, since they were given a copy of the entry made in the manorial rolls showing the change-over.

The Black Death made villeins anxious to become copyholders, but the lords now strongly opposed commutation. The reason is simple. Labour was so scarce after the plague that it became very valuable. Labourers who had demanded 4*d*. for reaping an acre of corn now demanded 9*d*. Hence it was more profitable for the labourers to work for money; but it was more profitable for the lords to enforce the old labour-services. In 1351 the Statute of Labourers ordered prices and wages to remain the same as before the Black Death:

> Carters, ploughmen, drivers of the plough, shepherds, swineherds, and all other servants shall take liveries and wages, accustomed in the twentieth year of the present King's reign [*i.e.*, 1347], or four years before, so that in the country where wheat was wont to be given, they shall take for the bushel ten pence, or wheat at the will of the giver, till it be otherwise ordained.

It was found impossible to enforce the statute, despite heavy penalties. Villeins fled from their manors to obtain high wages, and the lords had to find new ways of working their land. All this helped to break up the manor and the feudal system of which it formed a part.

The Hundred Years' War again

Soon after the Black Death the war was renewed. Many soldiers of fortune banded themselves into 'free companies' under the command of a famous leader, and lived on plunder

and ransoms. One of these bands is described in Conan Doyle's *White Company*, although the author paints his heroes in much too favourable a light. France suffered terribly from their raids and plundering.

In 1356 the French were once more defeated at Poitiers by the English long-bowmen, and the King of France himself was taken a prisoner by the Black Prince. In the following year he was led by his captor through the streets of London, before he was released on promise of a heavy ransom. By the Treaty of Bretigny (1360) Edward gave up his claim to the French throne, but was left in possession of Aquitaine, Ponthieu, and Calais. The French King's ransom was fixed at ten million gold crowns.

This did not end the war. The English companies continued to plunder, but they found their match in a new French leader, Bertrand du Guesclin, whose policy was to lure the enemy on, lay waste the countryside, and cut off stragglers. The English fortunes declined. The Black Prince caught a fever in Spain and had often to be carried about on a litter. In 1370 he massacred the defenceless people of Limoges—a cruel act which shows how hollow much of the chivalry of the Middle Ages was and how impossible it is to play the cruel game of war by rules like a game of cricket.

In 1376 the Black Prince, who had returned to England, died. In 1377 Edward III died, and was followed in 1380 by Bertrand du Guesclin and the French King. They had spent their lives in fighting, and under them the medieval ideals of chivalry and knighthood had reached their highest level. Edward III had founded the Order of the Garter and had begun the building of St George's Chapel at Windsor; after Poitiers the Black Prince had waited on his royal captive like a servant. But the results of their work that really counted were the loss of lives and the high taxation in both countries, and the ruin of the once fair face of France.

A Boy King, Richard II

Edward III was succeeded by Richard II, the ten-year-old son of the Black Prince. The government was left to the King's uncles and other barons. The war against France still dragged on; but it was going badly and leading to high taxation. Discontent was general, and soon produced the Peasants' Revolt, or Wat Tyler's Rebellion, of 1381.

Causes of Discontent

Ever since the Black Death the countryside had been unsettled. The Statute of Labourers had proved a failure, and both wages and prices had risen. The lords of the manors had tried hard to cling to their old rights of labour-service over their tenants. They met with little success in trying to reverse commutations already made. But they strongly opposed any further commutation in the future, and enlisted the aid of the lawyers in enforcing their rights. This led to much grumbling on the part of those villeins who were still forced to work for their lords. They slacked in their duties, or else fled from their manors. Some obtained high wages on other manors, or went into the towns; others led a 'Robin Hood' life of waylaying the wealthy upper classes.

There was also much grumbling in the towns. The wealthy gilds had seized control of the trade, industry, and government of the towns and made it very difficult for poorer men or newcomers to start businesses of their own.

The Black Death had brought problems of labour-shortage, high wages, and high prices to the lords. But the lords were better off than the villeins and were able to weather the storm. Many of them let out their manors with all the stock to some well-to-do tenant (maybe their own steward) who paid a rent and then worked the land to obtain a profit. This system, which had been practised even before the plague, was the dim beginning of our modern system of

farm-leases. Other lords found a solution to their problem in turning to sheep-farming. Wool was fetching high prices, not only for export to Flanders, but also for use in our own native woollen industry, which had grown considerably in the fourteenth century, especially after Edward III had invited Flemish weavers to settle in England. Sheep-farming also required less labour than crop-growing. It is doubtful whether at this period the change to sheep-farming threw men out of work (though it certainly did later), as there were not enough men for the work that there was; but it was a sign that things were changing in the country-side, and in some cases the necessary enclosures led to men losing their strips of land.

Two sparks ignited the smouldering discontent. One was the preaching of John Ball; the other was the poll-tax.

John Ball, a priest, went from village to village preaching the equality of man and asking his searching question:

> When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?

Froissart, who calls him a 'foolish priest,' says he would thus address the people as they left church on a Sunday:

> We be all come from one father and from one mother, Adam and Eve; whereby can they say or show that they be greater lords than we be, saving by what they cause us to labour for what they spend? They are clothed in velvet and we be vestured with poor cloth; they have their wines, spices and good bread, and we have rye and straw and drink water; they dwell in fair houses, and we have the pain and travail, rain and wind in the fields. . . . Let us go to the king, he is young, and show him what servage we be in, and show him how we will have it otherwise, or else we will provide us of some remedy, either by fairness or otherwise.

To pay for the disastrous French war the council of barons decided to levy a poll-tax, *i.e.*, a tax on every head. Every one over the age of fifteen had to pay an amount varying

from a groat (*4d.*) to ten marks (£6 13*s.* 4*d.*) according to his wealth. Even so, it pressed more heavily on the poor than the rich. People concealed the numbers in their families, and the population seemed suddenly to shrink. At Brentwood, in Essex, a tax-gatherer was stoned and driven out.

The Peasants' Revolt (1381)

Soon all the counties round London were in open revolt. The men of Kent led the rebellion. Under their leader, Wat Tyler, an old soldier from the French wars, they burned manor-houses and destroyed manorial records. They released John Ball from prison and marched on London. For several days the capital lay at their mercy. The Tower was stormed and the Archbishop of Canterbury put to death. In a panic the government promised the rebels' chief demands: the abolition of villein-services, and the leasing of land to ex-villeins at *4d.* an acre. Later the fourteen-year-old Richard II met the rebels at Smithfield, but while he was talking with their leaders, the Mayor of London killed Wat Tyler with a dagger. The angry crowd surged forward, but Richard rode towards them, shouting. "I will be your chief and captain, and you shall have from me all that you seek." Believing his fair promises, the rebels dispersed and trudged hopefully back to their fields.

The King and his Council broke their promises. Hundreds of leaders, including John Ball, were hanged, and villeins were forced back to their work. "Villeins ye are, and villeins ye shall remain!" the King now exclaimed in the changed circumstances. But neither King nor Council could control the future, and a century later villeinage had practically disappeared from England.

The End of the Plantagenets

Richard II was a failure as a king. At first his powers were exercised by barons called Lords Appellant, but when

he came of age, he took the reins of government into his own hands. The middle years of Richard's reign were quite successful, as the King could be popular and capable if he chose. Unfortunately he was rash and unstable, and brought disaster upon himself. He tried to rule without Parliament, and issued laws and collected taxes on his own authority; after years of apparent friendship with the barons, he executed or banished many of them. Among those banished was his own cousin, Henry Bolingbroke, the son of John of Gaunt, Earl of Lancaster.

In 1399 John of Gaunt ("time-honoured Lancaster," as Shakespeare calls him) died. Richard then committed an act of folly; he confiscated the estates that should have fallen to Bolingbroke. The latter invaded England and found so much discontent that he was able to win the crown of England as well as his estates. Richard was in Ireland at the time; on his return he fell into a fit of despair and surrendered to Bolingbroke. He was forced to abdicate, and Parliament declared Bolingbroke King as Henry IV (1399). In the following year Richard died, or more probably was put to death, at Pontefract Castle. Thus ended the Plantagenet line; the new king was the first of the Lancastrians.

The Fourteenth Century

1. *Attacks on the Papacy.* In the fourteenth century the feeling of nationality—of having a life apart from other nations—took firmer hold upon England. This was partly the result of the war against France. One of the ways it showed itself was by attacks on the Papacy.

During the whole of Edward III's reign the Popes were Frenchmen who lived at Avignon under the French King's influence. This 'Babylonish Captivity' caused England to oppose many of the Papal claims. Edward III passed two important acts against the Pope. The Statute of Provisors forbade the bestowal of English church-offices upon foreigners. The Statute of Praemunire forbade law-cases being

carried to Papal courts, and excluded Papal Bulls and legates from England without the king's special permission.

The greatest attack upon the Papacy was made by John Wyclif (1320–1384). Wyclif was one of the greatest scholars of his time and became Master of Balliol College, Oxford.

PART OF WYCLIF'S BIBLE

This shows the beginning of the Gospel according to St John. Notice the eagle, which in medieval art stood for St John. The other evangelists are often represented as follows: St Matthew by a man, St Mark by a lion, and St Luke by a bull.

Himself a priest of deep sincerity, he was struck by the difference between his Master, Jesus Christ, and the rich, splendid, pleasure-loving bishops of the Catholic Church. The Church was still performing much good work, but it had grown wealthy and powerful, and many of its officials —priests, monks, friars, bishops, archbishops, and even the Pope himself—seemed more intent upon the material affairs of the world than upon matters of the spirit. Wyclif attacked all this. Religion, he said, was a question of the soul and of one's inner life, and not of pomp and ceremony and outward

observance. He attacked the important Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which said that the priest at Mass could change the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Christ. He taught that the Bible, and not the priest or Pope, was the highest authority in religion, and to make the Bible more understandable by the ordinary people he translated it into English. He wrote other books in English also, which was very unusual in those days of Latin.

The Archbishop of Canterbury summoned Wyclif to answer for his opinions, and the Pope denounced him as a heretic. But his cause was championed by the royal John of Gaunt and some of the nobles, who saw in his teachings an excuse for attacking the wealth of the Church. He escaped punishment and spent his last years in peace as Rector of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. He died in 1384.

Wyclif has been called "the morning-star of the Reformation." His followers, known as 'Poor Preachers,' or Lollards, tried to carry on his work; but they were too few, and after his death they were gradually stamped out of existence. Two years after Richard II's deposition an Act was passed ordering them to be burnt. England remained Roman Catholic for more than a century after Wyclif, but when the Reformation did occur, the work of this early opponent of Rome was looked back upon with pride.

2. *Growth of English Language and Literature.* In the fourteenth century the English language became the recognized language of speech throughout the country. The old Anglo-Saxon tongue had triumphed over its French competitor, though in so doing it was enriched by the addition of many French and Latin words. Doubtless the war against France hastened the growing popularity of the English tongue.

In 1362 an Act ordered all pleadings in the law-courts to be in English instead of French. In the same year Parliament was first opened with an English speech. It is also noteworthy that Edward III was the last English king who spoke French as his mother-tongue.

The native language also made its appearance as the language of literature. Wyclif used it for his translation of the Bible. Two other writers used it for their poems.

William Langland, a west-country priest, was the author of *The Vision Concerning Piers the Plowman*, which was first written down in 1362 and later revised at different times. The author describes how, weary of wandering, he fell asleep on the Malvern Hills and saw a vision of a field full of folk. This field is really the world with all its different kinds of inhabitants, and in describing it the author tells us his thoughts about the conditions of his age. The wealthy clergy are attacked, especially the friars who had departed from the worthy ideals of St Francis and St Dominic. The common folk, in the person of Piers the Plowman, are held up for our admiration, and we are shown their struggles against the injustice and oppression of the upper classes. *Piers the Plowman* is the first book (for the poem occupies about 100 pages) in our own language which describes for us the lives and feelings of the common people.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

From an old manuscript in the British Museum, London. The only existing portrait of Chaucer.

The other poet, Geoffrey Chaucer (1340–1400), differs from Langland in many ways. Although not well-to-do, Chaucer spent much of his life among the official and the upper classes. He was captured in the French war, and Edward III contributed £16 towards his ransom. He went abroad several times, to Italy, Flanders, and France, on missions for the King. For long he was in charge of the

taxes on wool exported through the port of London, and later he was ordered by Richard II to have St George's Chapel at Windsor repaired. At one time he represented Kent in Parliament. Chaucer was thus an experienced man-of-affairs—widely travelled, with a knowledge of foreign languages and literature, and an understanding of men of all sorts, especially of the upper classes. These qualities appear in his writings, the best known of which is the *Canterbury Tales*.

This famous poem, which was written about 1386–1388, tells how, when the author was staying at the Tabard Inn in Southwark,

> Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage
> To Caunterbury with full devout corage,
> At nyght were come into that hostelrye
> Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye,
> On sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
> In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
> That towards Caunterbury wolden ryde.

The twenty-nine pilgrims included all sorts of persons: a knight who had fought against the heathen in many distant lands; a yeoman clad in coat and hood of green; a prioress whose table-manners were so good that she never spilt her food upon her lap; a monk who loved hare-hunting for his sport and a fat swan for his dinner; a merchant with a forked beard; a student from Oxford who loved books better than gold; a good wife from Bath who had had five husbands; and many others. Chaucer's account of the friar has already been given on p. 121. As they journey to St Thomas's tomb at Canterbury they take it in turns to tell their tales to pass the time away.

In fourteenth-century England there were several well-defined dialects. Langland had written his poems in a western dialect; but Chaucer and Wyclif used what is called the East Midland dialect, which was spoken in the important district containing London and the two univer-

sities of Oxford and Cambridge. The East Midland dialect gradually triumphed over the others and grew into what we now call 'King's English.'

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Show how the Angevin Empire was (*a*) built up by Henry II of England, (*b*) partly destroyed by Philip Augustus of France.

2. Describe two English victories in the Hundred Years' War. Why was England unable to keep her French possessions despite these victories?

3. Show the similarity between scutage and commutation of labour-service.

4. What changes on the manor helped to produce the Peasants' Revolt?

5. Mention three important facts which show the growth of the feeling of nationality in fourteenth-century England.

6. What do you associate with the following places: Avignon, Calais, St George's Chapel at Windsor, Malvern Hills, Lutterworth?

7. Describe how the Plantagenet line of kings was brought to an end.

8. Why do you think the two following events could occur almost side by side:

(*a*) murder of the Archbishop of Canterbury by the peasants in 1381;

(*b*) processions of pilgrims to the tomb of the murdered Archbishop Becket at Canterbury?

CHAPTER XVII

ENGLAND AND FRANCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

English Kings

Lancastrians	Henry IV	(1399–1413)
	Henry V	(1413–1422)
	Henry VI	(1422–1461)
Yorkists	Edward IV	(1461–1483)
	Edward V	(1483)
	Richard III	(1483–1485)

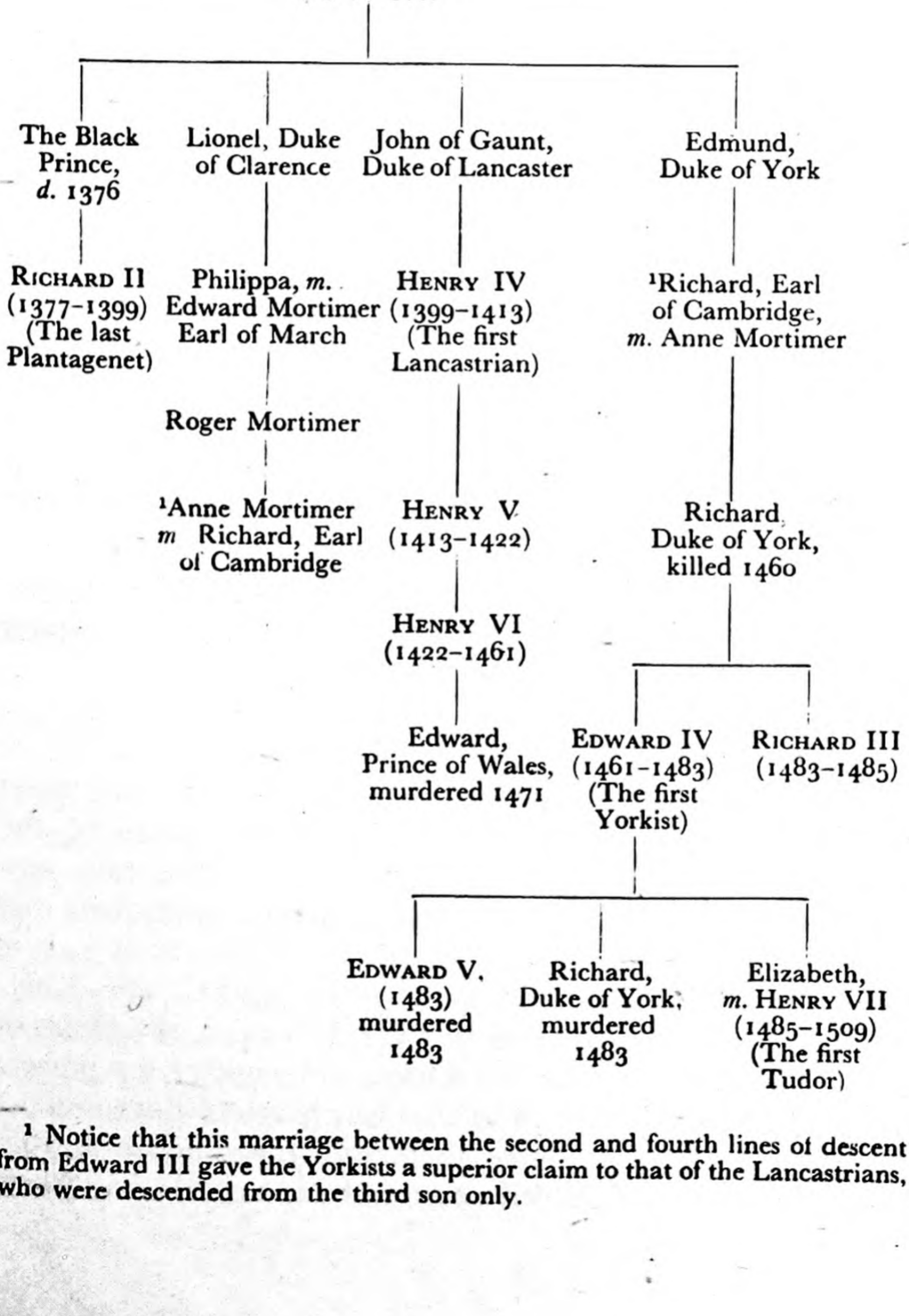
The First Lancastrian—a Troubled Reign

We have seen how Henry Bolingbroke deposed his cousin, Richard II, and had himself crowned as Henry IV in 1399. Henry was the first Lancastrian. The genealogical table on p. 237 shows the weakness of his position. Henry was the son of John of Gaunt, the *third* son of Edward III; the line of descent through the *second* son of Edward III was at the time passed over, as in 1399 it was represented only by the young Earl of March. Fifty years later the rivalry between Edward III's descendants produced the Wars of the Roses.

Henry IV was an able king; but his reign was full of trouble, as he had to humour his friends and crush his enemies. Parliament gained in power, as Henry could not afford to follow Richard II's example of imposing taxes without its consent. The wishes of the House of Commons, as expressed by their chairman, or Speaker, received greater attention. The Church, which had lost some of its authority in the face of the attacks of Lollards and greedy nobles, was given full power to stamp out heresy. A law of 1401, "*De Heretico Comburendo*," permitted the burning of heretics; as a consequence the braver Lollards were put to death, while the weaker ones recanted.

LANCASTRIAN AND YORKIST KINGS OF ENGLAND, FROM 1399 TO 1485

(Kings in capital letters)


EDWARD III
(1327–1377)
The Black Prince, d. 1376
Lionel, Duke of Clarence
John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster
Edmund, Duke of York
RICHARD II (1377–1399) (The last Plantagenet)
Philippa, m. Edward Mortimer Earl of March
HENRY IV (1399–1413) (The first Lancastrian)
[1]Richard, Earl of Cambridge, m. Anne Mortimer
Roger Mortimer
[1]Anne Mortimer m Richard, Earl of Cambridge
HENRY V (1413–1422)
Richard, Duke of York, killed 1460
HENRY VI (1422–1461)
Edward, Prince of Wales, murdered 1471
EDWARD IV (1461–1483) (The first Yorkist)
RICHARD III (1483–1485)
EDWARD V. (1483) murdered 1483
Richard, Duke of York, murdered 1483
Elizabeth, m. HENRY VII (1485–1509) (The first Tudor)

[1] Notice that this marriage between the second and fourth lines of descent from Edward III gave the Yorkists a superior claim to that of the Lancastrians, who were descended from the third son only.

Rebellions in the north and in Wales occupied much of the new King's attention. In 1400 the Welsh revolted under Owen Glendower, a descendant of Llewelyn. The Scots also invaded England and collected much booty, but on their way back they were severely defeated by the Earl of Northumberland and his son, Henry Percy (nicknamed Hotspur). The Percies, however, were dissatisfied with their rewards, and Hotspur marched south to join Glendower. Henry intercepted Hotspur at Shrewsbury, defeated the rebels, and slew their leader (1403). Northumberland continued rebellious; while not till 1409 was Glendower's power broken.

During the remainder of his reign, Henry was tortured with leprosy. To add to the King's worries, the Prince of Wales led a wild life and openly showed his impatience in awaiting his father's death. Shakespeare's plays about Henry IV exaggerate Prince Henry's wildness, and show Prince 'Hal' as the boon companion of rogues and drunkards like Sir John Falstaff. But 'Hal' was capable beneath all his gaiety, and when his father died in 1413 the crown passed to a man of great courage, resource, and intelligence. Lancastrian fortunes reached their highest point under Henry V.

Henry V revives the Hundred Years' War

Henry V was a great soldier with greater ambitions. Soon after his accession he revived the English claim to the French throne. A war with promise of adventure and plunder would make him popular and strengthen the Lancastrian position.

France at this time was in a sorry plight. The King, Charles VI, was mad, and two great princes, the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Orleans, struggled for power. Murder and treachery led to civil war between Burgundians and Orleanists, and Henry V thought the time favourable for fishing in the troubled waters of his neighbour. When

his claim to the throne was rejected, he prepared for invasion.

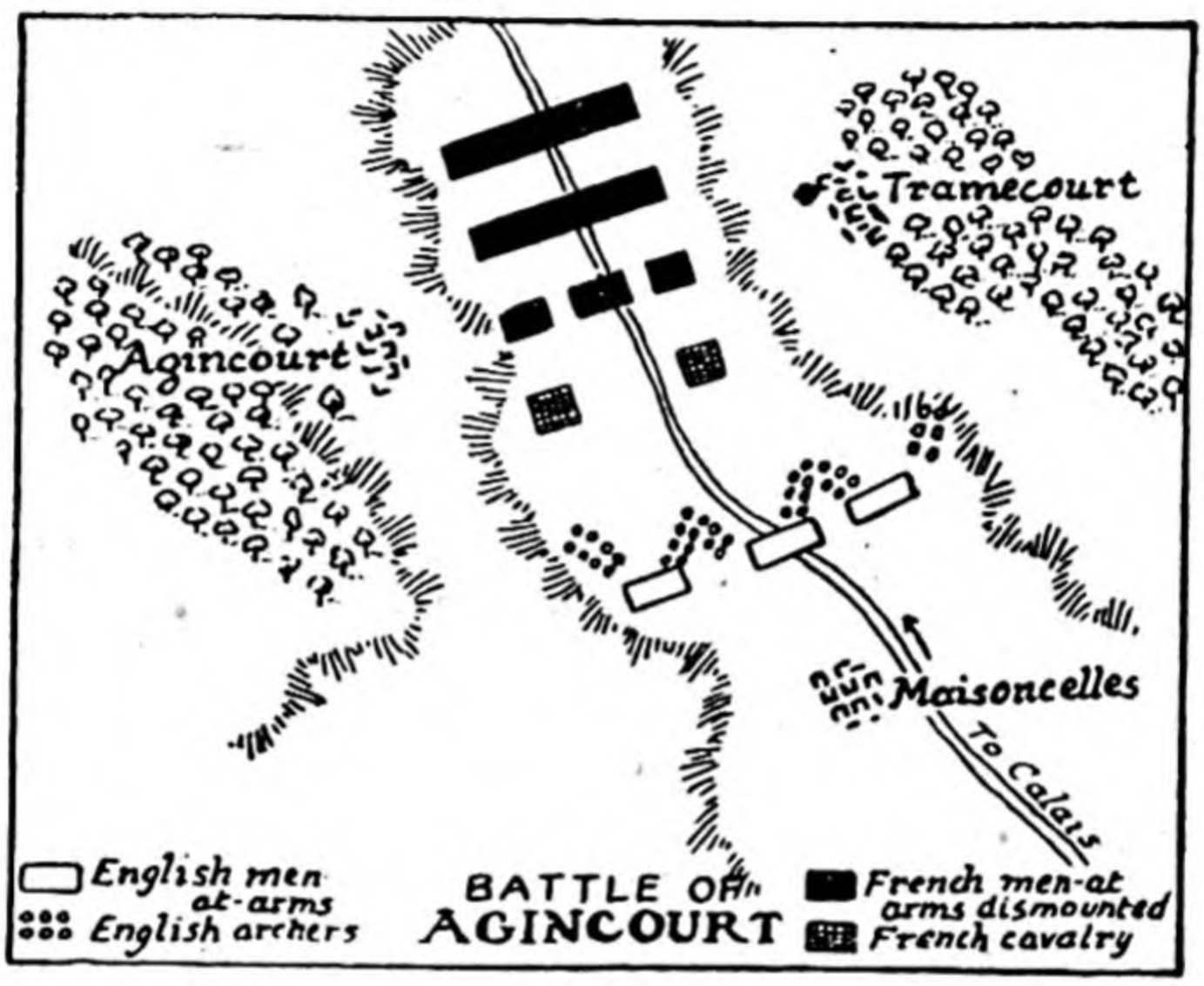
With a huge army of archers, mounted men-at-arms, and engineers he set sail from Southampton, in the August of 1415. His first objective was the port of Harfleur, the key to the Duchy of Normandy. After a long and bitter siege, in which thousands of his men were killed or died of disease, Harfleur was captured. Winter was now approaching, but Henry resolved to march along the coast to the English possession of Calais. At Agincourt he was confronted by a French force over three times the size of his own (October, 1415). The battle that followed was in many ways a repetition of Crécy seventy years before. Henry relied largely upon his archers, whom he placed in crescent formations guarding the approaches to his men-at-arms. The French were unable to take full advantage of their superior numbers, as they were hemmed in between two woods. Moreover, a ploughed field, sodden with heavy rains, separated the two armies. French horsemen and plate-armoured infantry could only move slowly across such ground and were an easy prey for the English archers. When it came to close fighting the lightly clad English with their battle-axes were more than a match for their armoured opponents, who, once down, could not rise without help. The result was a smashing English victory, and many thousands of Frenchmen were left slain on the field.

ENGLISH KNIGHT IN HENRY V'S REIGN

Notice that by this time mail armour has been entirely replaced by plate armour.

Henry could reap no advantage from his victory and soon returned to England. He spent the next few years in further invasions and conquests. France was still rent by civil strife, and the treacherous murder of the Duke of Burgundy by the Orleanists (to which party belonged the Dauphin) caused the Burgundians to go over to the English side. The

mad and helpless King of France was forced to sign the Treaty of Troyes (1420). By this treaty Henry was to marry Catherine, the French King's daughter, and to displace the Dauphin as the heir to the French throne. It seemed that Henry's ambition of uniting France and England under his own rule would soon be achieved. But Henry died first in



1422, at the early age of thirty-five. Two months later the French King died.

Henry's heir in England was his baby son, Henry VI, not yet a year old. Under the Treaty of Troyes this baby was now King of France as well. But would the French accept him?

Joan of Arc, the Maid of Orleans

Two uncles of the new King ruled on his behalf, the Duke of Gloucester in England and the Duke of Bedford in France. The Dauphin quite naturally claimed his father's throne, and found much support among the French nobles. But the Duke of Bedford, who was an able soldier and continued the alliance with the Burgundians, was able to conquer bit by bit the north of France. By 1429 the English forces had reached the gates of Orleans, but at this juncture they were beaten by a French peasant girl, Joan of Arc.

Joan was the daughter of a prosperous peasant of Domrémy, in eastern France, and one day she appeared before the captain of some near-by French troops with a strange tale. She had seen visions, she said, and heard the voices of St Catherine and other saints who had commanded her to go to the assistance of the Dauphin. At first the captain thought her mad and refused to take her seriously; but gradually he was impressed with her earnestness, and sent her under escort to the Dauphin. We can imagine the obstacles confronting her at the French court; but eventually she was given command of the troops which were to relieve Orleans. Mounted on a white horse, she rode at the head of her men, giving them the confidence they so badly needed. With only 200 men she was able to enter the city, whence she led another attack against the besiegers. A French chronicler describes what followed:

> But then a cry arose that the English were coming in force from the side of St Privé, and by this cry the men who were with the Maid were panic-stricken, and began to fly straight to the ford of the Loire, whereby the Maid was much grieved, and was obliged to retire herself with her few men. Then the English raised a great shout at the French and sallied out in force to pursue the Maid, crying after her and saying insulting words; and suddenly she turned, and though she had few men, she faced the English, and marched rapidly against them with standard unfurled. Then, by God's will, were the English overcome, so that they took cowardly and shameful flight.

The English were later defeated at a great battle at Patay. Orleans was saved, and in the same year (1429) the Dauphin was crowned as Charles VII in the Cathedral of Rheims.

Joan's work was now done; the voices ceased to counsel her, and she desired to return to Domrémy. But the French King refused to let her go, and in 1430 she was captured by the Burgundians, who six months later sold her to the English

for 10,000 francs. The ungrateful Charles made no effort to ransom her, and the English in revenge accused her of witchcraft. She was found guilty by a Church court at Rouen, and burned in the market-place, where her statue

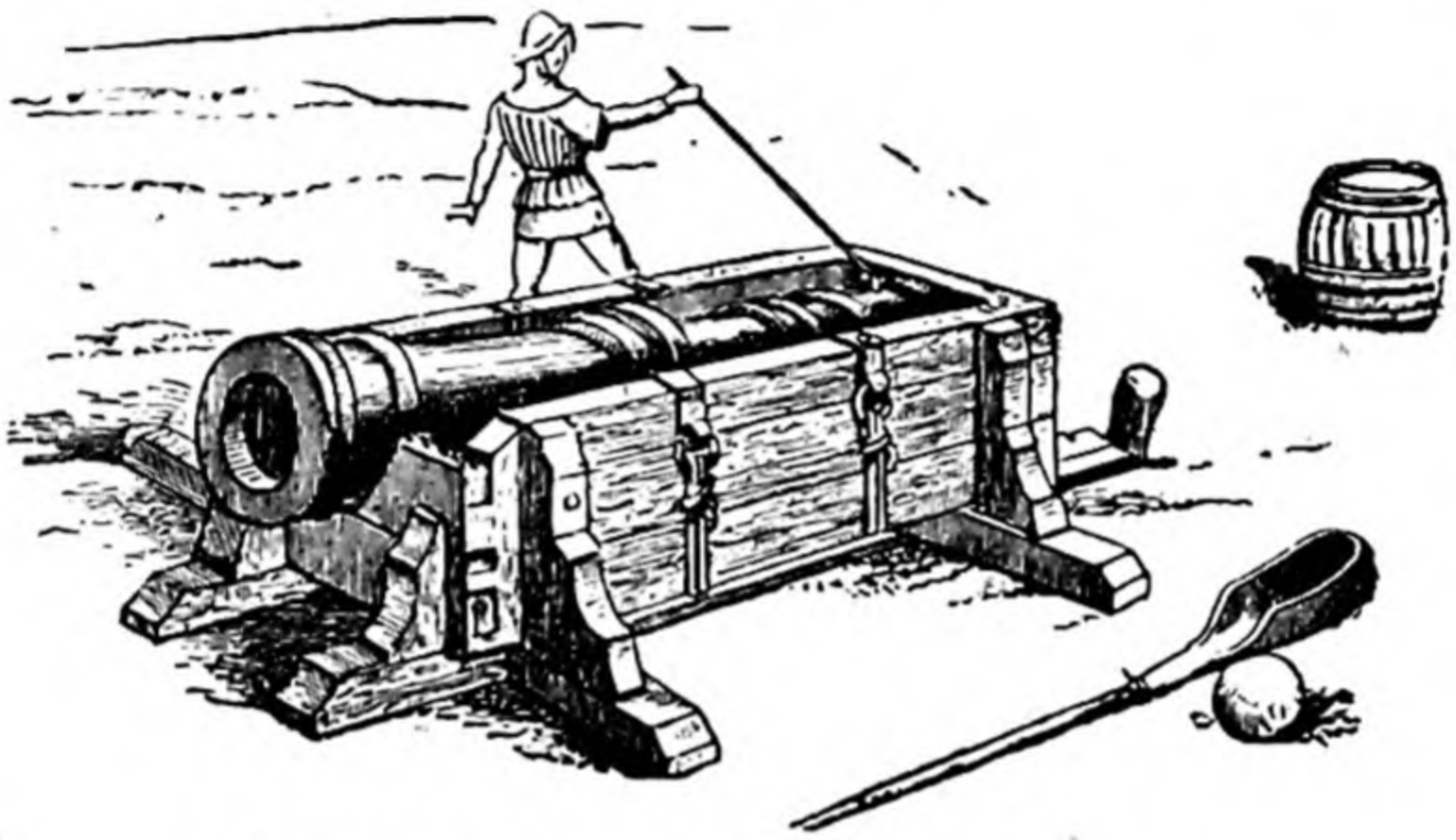
TOWER AT ROUEN WHERE JOAN WAS IMPRISONED

can now be seen. In 1919 the Roman Catholic Church declared her a saint.

The End of the Hundred Years' War

The work of Joan was little short of a miracle. She had revived the hopes of her countrymen and instilled in them the desire to make their country free and united. The spirit of nationality infected Frenchmen as it had infected Englishmen in the previous century. Soon the Burgundians joined forces with the French King. In 1435 the Duke of Bedford died, and no later general had quite the same ability. The

French gradually captured our fortresses with the new weapons of war that the Hundred Years' War had produced —the bombards, which could shoot stone balls up to 200 pounds in weight, and the culverins, or large cannon, that could shoot leaden balls. In 1453 the war was brought to an end by the defeat of the English at Châtillon, in Guienne. Only one town remained in English hands—Calais, Edward



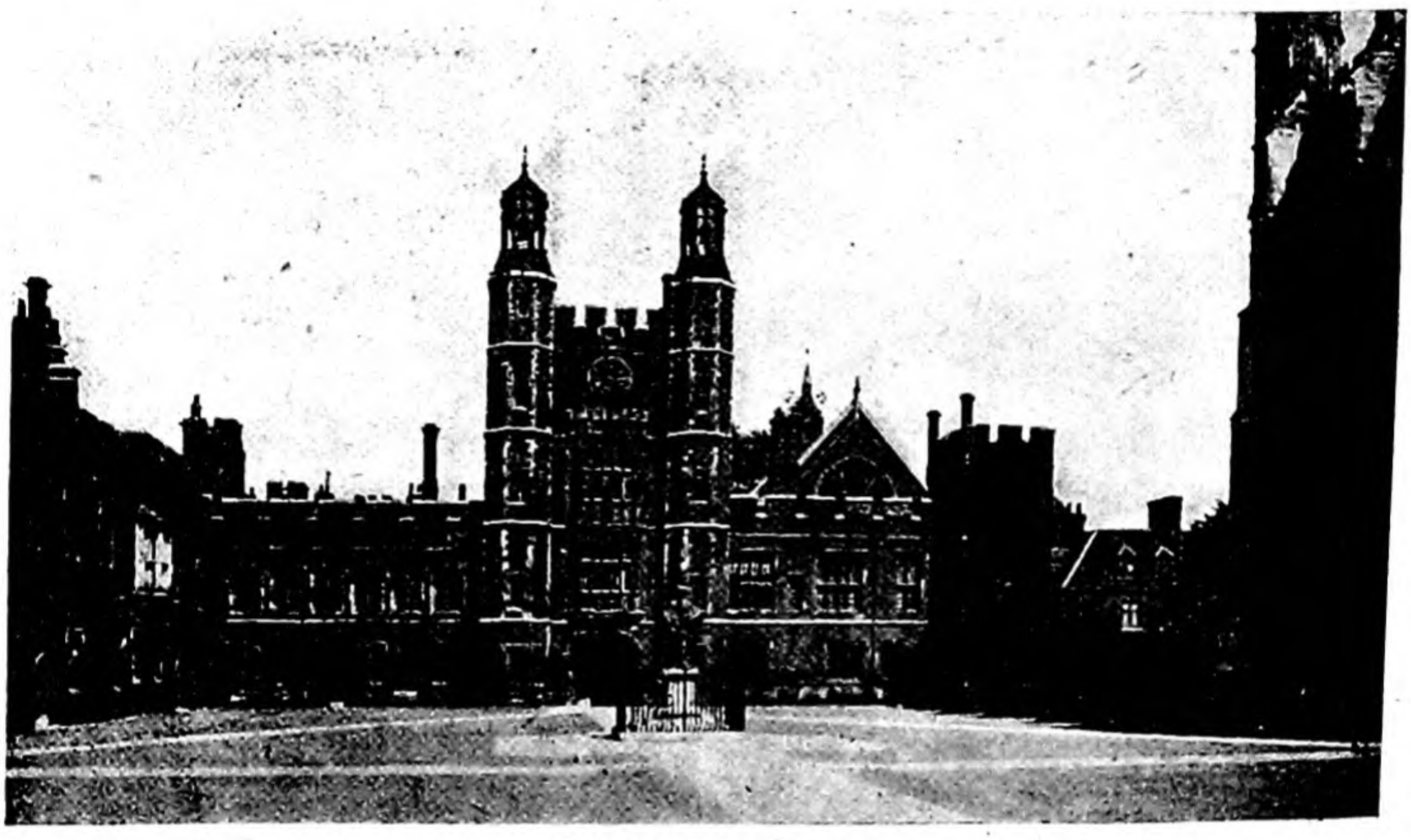
BOMBARD OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

III's prize after Crécy. Calais remained English for another century, but apart from this and a few other exceptions, France was now a united country. Her kings continued to add to their personal possessions, and by 1500 the French monarchy was one of the strongest in Europe.

The Hundred Years' War had united France and given both English and French a strong feeling of nationality. But these results had been achieved only at an enormous cost. Thousands of lives, many of them quite innocent, had been lost; large parts of France had been devastated; the spectacular English victories of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt had been barren of any permanent result. Moreover, plunder and killing had become a trade with many men who now returned to England with no prospect of satisfying their evil passions. Two years after the end of the Hundred Years' War the Wars of the Roses broke out; there is a connexion between the two events.

Henry VI, a Weak King

When Henry VI grew up, he proved a most unsuitable king. He was not without his good points; he was merciful, devoted to his religion, and anxious to promote education. To him is due the foundation of Eton College and King's College, Cambridge, the famous chapel of the latter being



ETON COLLEGE

In the centre of the quadrangle can be seen a statue of the founder, Henry VI.

Photo Valentine

one of the best examples of Perpendicular architecture in England. But he was a very weak ruler for his troubled times, and was a puppet in the hands of his powerful relatives and barons.

Under him the power of Parliament reached its highest point in the Middle Ages. But Parliament was too often the tool of the great baronial families, who used the elections and the meetings in order to further their own ends. In reality, the Lancastrian Parliaments were trying to run before they had learnt how to walk. They could not deal with the difficulties of the time; what England really needed was another Henry II or Edward I.

On a smaller scale the feudal anarchy of Stephen's reign 300 years before once more reared its head. Barons engaged in private war, besieging castles or manor-houses and seizing estates without regard to law and order. To promote their interests, the barons adopted a practice known as 'livery and maintenance.' They collected supporters from wherever possible (tenants, friends, servants, old soldiers), clothed them in livery by bestowing upon them the baronial badge, and promised to maintain or protect them against other barons or even against the king himself. If any of these followers were brought up for trial in a law-court, their barons would invade the court or otherwise force the jury to let them off. In 1450 the people themselves rose in revolt under Jack Cade, a soldier; they were disgusted with the mismanagement of the French war and with the high taxation it had produced. It was only with difficulty that the weak government suppressed this rebellion.

The real ruler of the country was Henry's wife, Margaret of Anjou, an energetic and forceful woman, jealous of her rights but with little tact in dealing with other people. Between her and Richard, Duke of York, who was generally regarded as the next heir to the throne, there was bitter enmity.

The Beginning of the Wars of the Roses

In 1453 a son was born to Henry, and the Duke of York found himself no longer heir to the throne. But in the same year Henry (whose grandfather had been the mad Charles VI of France) became mad, and Parliament declared the Duke of York the Protector of the realm. The Duke of York was a very able man, and began the badly needed work of reforming the government, but the King's quick recovery interrupted his plans. The Duke of York refused thus to be robbed of all share in the government. He raised an army, and in 1455 he defeated the King's forces at St Albans—the first battle in the Wars of the Roses.

For thirty years—from the first Battle of St Albans in 1455 to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485—the war continued. But at times there were long periods of peace, especially after the Yorkists had gained the upper hand. Moreover, although the war was fought with no mercy and wrought havoc among the leading nobles and their professional followers, it did not affect the ordinary people very much. Life continued with them much as before. In this way the Wars of the Roses differed very much from the civil wars of Stephen's reign.

The Triumph of the Yorkists

The two sides were distinguished by their roses, the Lancastrians taking a red rose as their badge, the Yorkists a white. For several years the fortunes of the war favoured first one side and then the other. Richard of York was supported by the most powerful noble in the country, the Earl of Warwick, whose vast estates and numerous followers made him a factor of great importance. Soon Richard began to put forward a claim to the throne itself, based on his descent from the second son of Edward III (see the genealogical table on p. 237). There is no denying the fact that from the point of view of descent the Yorkists had the better claim. But Richard was defeated in 1460 at Wakefield, and his head, cut off and adorned in mockery with a paper crown, was stuck on the walls of York. His son, Edward, inherited his dead father's claims, and with the aid of the Earl of Warwick, completely defeated the Lancastrians at the Battle of Towton (1461). Towton was one of the biggest battles ever fought in England. As a result the Yorkists, in the person of their duke, who was crowned as Edward IV, became the rulers of England. Henry VI was soon captured and imprisoned, and his energetic wife, Margaret of Anjou, was driven into exile.

Edward IV (1461–1483)

For over twenty years Edward IV gave England the blessings of strong government and peace, though even his reign was disturbed by a fresh outbreak of war.

Edward at times was easy-going and slack and content to leave the government in the hands of the Earl of Warwick. But beneath the surface he was capable and was determined to be the real ruler of the country. His position indeed was very strong. Many of the unruly nobles were dead, and much of their wealth went to the King and his supporters. Parliament was discredited, and Edward was able to rule without it. His great wealth, obtained from confiscated estates or from 'loans' which he forced the nobles to grant him, made him independent of the taxes voted by Parliament. The ordinary people supported him as their bulwark against fresh civil war, while the towns and merchants welcomed his encouragement of trade.

Only the middle years of his reign were troubled by war. Edward grew tired of the Earl of Warwick and showed that he was not prepared to become a puppet king. Warwick deserted his master and made peace with his old enemy in exile, Margaret of Anjou. Between them they conspired to drive Edward off the throne and place Henry VI, still a prisoner in the Tower, back upon it. They invaded England and for a few months succeeded. But Edward gathered his forces, and in two decisive blows he made himself master of England once more. At Barnet (1471) the Earl of Warwick, nicknamed 'the kingmaker,' was slain. In the same year at Tewkesbury Margaret was defeated and her only son killed. Soon afterwards the luckless Henry VI 'died' in the Tower.

Edward IV's reign was noteworthy for the introduction of the printing-press into England by William Caxton—an event which will be treated more fully in a later chapter. England, along with the rest of Europe, was moving slowly

out of the Middle Ages. But the movement was jerky as well as slow. On Edward's death in 1483 England slipped back once more into the Wars of the Roses.

The End of the Wars of the Roses

The new King was Edward V, the twelve-year old son of the late King. A Protector was appointed in the person of Richard, Duke of Gloucester, the King's uncle. Richard was a strong ruler, and, if he had liked, could have given the country good and peaceful government. Unfortunately he was ambitious and aimed to wear the crown himself. He executed many of the relatives of the late King's widow, and imprisoned Edward V and his younger brother in the Tower. When, later in the same year (1483), they disappeared, every one knew they had been murdered by their uncle, who now became Richard III.

This step was Richard's undoing. His revolting murder of the true Yorkist King lost him the support of the Yorkists, while his care in stamping out all possible Yorkist claimants only served to throw all his enemies into the Lancastrian camp. For the next claimant to the throne was Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, a cool and resourceful man who was descended on his mother's side from John of Gaunt, Earl of Lancaster, and on his father's side from a Welsh family named Tudor. Henry had been for some years an exile in Brittany, patiently awaiting his chance. Now, with Richard III's unpopularity at its height, he judged his time had come. The Yorkists themselves offered to support him, when he promised to marry Elizabeth, the daughter of Edward IV.

In 1485 Henry landed in Wales and marched into England. At Bosworth, near Leicester, he was met by Richard III. The ensuing battle was momentous for England. Richard fought bravely, but received only half-hearted support from many of his followers. Lord Stanley with many troops deserted him and joined forces with Henry.

At the end of the battle Richard was dead, and his battered crown was found under a hawthorn bush and placed on the head of Henry Tudor. England now had a new King, Henry VII, and a new royal line, the Tudors. The Wars of the Roses were over, and under the strong rule of the Tudors England was to pass safely from the Middle Ages into the modern period.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Why do you think the English were driven out of France despite their victories at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt?

2. Read Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part I* (Act II, Scene II) for an account of Prince Hal's wild life as a youth; and *Henry V* (Act III, Scene I) for Henry V's speech before the siege of Harfleur.

3. Write a short account of Joan of Arc.

4. Write notes on the following battles: Shrewsbury, Agincourt, Towton, and Bosworth.

5. What were the Wars of the Roses about? How were they brought to an end?

CHAPTER XVIII

EVENTS IN OTHER LANDS

Germany and the Holy Roman Empire

IMPORTANT events had been taking place in other countries while England had been unifying herself under strong Norman and Plantagenet rulers, and France had awakened to a sense of national consciousness as a result of the Hundred Years' War.

Let us deal first with Germany and the Holy Roman Empire. A glance at the map on p. 253 will show that the Holy Roman Empire stretched from the North and Baltic Seas through central Europe to the middle of Italy. It thus included certain districts not strictly part of Germany; but as the king of Germany was always the emperor as well, it is best to consider the Empire and Germany together. We have seen in Chapter IX what large powers the emperor possessed in theory and what little powers he possessed in practice. This state of affairs continued throughout the Middle Ages, with the emperor's powers becoming smaller rather than larger. The result was that Germany did not succeed in becoming a united nation like England and France. By the end of the Middle Ages she was split up into several hundred separate states, all owing a nominal allegiance to the emperor but all in reality practically independent. These states varied in size and importance. There were large states, like the Duchies of Bavaria and Austria; there were ecclesiastical states, like the Archbishoprics of Cologne and Trier; there were numerous small counties, territories belonging to knights, and free cities. Between these states there was often civil strife, which the emperor was powerless to put down. Germany in the Middle

Ages remained a feudal state, with the local rulers possessing greater powers than the central government. Why this was so is not easy to explain; but it was undoubtedly bound up with the position of the emperor. The emperor was always elected, and the seven powerful electors took good care that they did not elect some one who would diminish their own powers. The emperor had very few resources to draw upon, as there was no real provision for governing such a vast area, and often what the emperor had he squandered in quarrels with the Pope and in invasions of Italy.

Into the separate histories of the various states it is not necessary to enter. The family of Hapsburg obtained possession of Austria, and in the fifteenth century of Bohemia and Hungary; after a time it came to be always elected to the position of emperor. In north-eastern Germany was the Mark of Brandenburg, an outpost against the heathen Slavs; Crusades against the latter were made by the Teutonic knights, who were thus able to push the German frontier farther and farther eastward. The gradual growth of Brandenburg is important, because in time—long after the Middle Ages were over—this mark, or border-state, developed into the kingdom of Prussia and was able to unify Germany. Trade-routes from the Adriatic Sea to northern Europe led to the growth of wealthy cities in south Germany and in the Rhine valley; of these Nuremberg, Strassburg, Frankfort, and Cologne deserve mention. The trading-towns of the north German coast formed the powerful Hanseatic League.

During the Middle Ages certain districts along the fringe of the Empire were able to make themselves completely independent of even the emperor's nominal control, although most of them still remained within the imperial boundaries. Among these were the Netherlands with their prosperous cloth-making towns, the sturdy mountain folk of Switzerland, and the proud Italian cities of the plain of Lombardy.

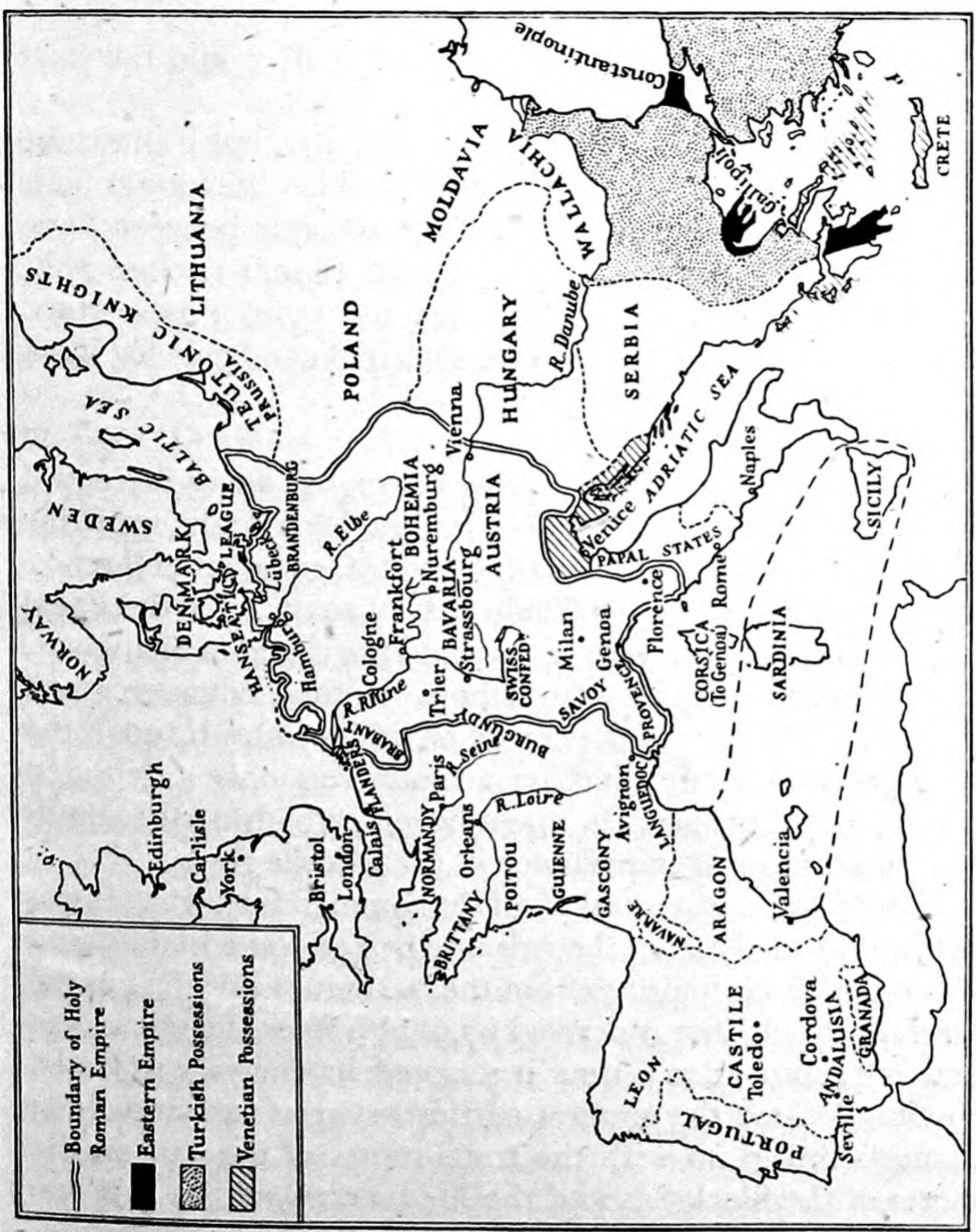
The story of Swiss independence deserves more than a mere mention.

The Struggle for Swiss Independence

The districts represented by modern Switzerland were originally part of the Holy Roman Empire. Indeed, the original home of the Hapsburgs was situated in Switzerland. During the thirteenth century the Hapsburgs had pursued a steady policy of acquiring more and more power over the districts surrounding their ancestral home, and when in 1273 Rudolph of Hapsburg was elected Emperor it seemed that the Swiss would now have to face the combined power of a local count and Holy Roman Emperor in one. Fortunately for them Rudolph was more intent upon winning the Duchy of Austria than upon subduing the Swiss. None the less, some of the Swiss banded themselves together to resist future aggression. In 1291 three Swiss cantons—Uri, Unterwalden, and Schwyz (hence the name Switzerland)—formed a league

> to defend each other with all our might and main, with our lives and property, both within and without our boundaries, each at his own expense, against every enemy whatever who shall attempt to molest us, either singly or collectively.

In the same year Rudolph died, and the struggle continued against his Hapsburg successors. For long the Swiss maintained that they were fighting, not against the emperor's authority, but against the aggressions of the Count of Hapsburg; but as the Hapsburgs hereafter were very often emperors as well, this distinction gradually became of no importance. It was against Rudolph's successor that the legendary figure of William Tell was supposed to have rebelled. One of the most hated of the Austrian governors placed a hat upon a pole in the market-square and ordered every passer-by to salute it. When William Tell failed to do so, he was ordered as a punishment to shoot at long range at an apple placed on his son's head. Taking careful aim,



EUROPE IN 1415

Tell shot the arrow straight through the apple. The governor, Gessler, was annoyed and, seeing Tell concealing a second arrow, asked him the meaning of it. Tell replied, "Had I injured my child my second shaft would not have missed thy heart."

The story of William Tell is not history; but it illustrates the courage and determination of these mountain folk. Right through the Middle Ages the struggle between Swiss and Austrian continued. The three original cantons were gradually joined by others, and by 1500 a new state, Switzerland, had won freedom and independence for itself.

Disunity in Italy

Italy in the Middle Ages, like Germany, never succeeded in becoming a united state. In northern Italy were the important city-states of Milan, Venice, Genoa, and Florence. In the centre, stretching from coast to coast, were the Papal states. In the south were Naples and the island of Sicily.

The northern cities were famous for their commerce and industry. Milan was the centre of trade-routes through the plain of Lombardy, and its armour was once celebrated throughout Europe. Its magnificent cathedral still stands to remind us of its importance in the Middle Ages.

Venice was the greatest of all the commercial ports. It was situated at the head of the Adriatic Sea on some islands, and was founded by fugitives from the barbarian invaders in the Dark Ages. At first it derived its wealth from the sale of fish and salt; but after a time it devoted its energies to trade. Venice became the greatest carrier between east and west; its fleets linked up with the trade-routes of the east on the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. At one time it had over three thousand merchant vessels, besides forty-five war-galleys. The Crusades increased its importance, and it was due to Venetian influence that the Fourth Crusade was launched, not against the Saracens, but against the Christians of Constantinople, who were the rivals of

Venice. In time the 'Queen of the Adriatic' humbled all her rivals, including Genoa, and established a widespread empire along the Adriatic coast and in the more easterly Mediterranean. The dependence of Venetian prosperity upon the sea was symbolized every year by the ceremony known as 'the wedding of the sea.' The doge, or duke, stood in the bows of the state barge and cast a golden ring into the Adriatic with the words, "We have wedded thee, O sea, in token of our rightful and perpetual dominion."

It was a Venetian traveller, Marco Polo (1254–1323), who made the most remarkable journey during the whole of the Middle Ages. In 1271 he set forth overland across Asia to distant Cathay, or China. Here he stayed for many years at the court of the great Mongol Emperor, Kubla Khan, at Pekin. After an absence of twenty-four years Marco Polo returned to Venice, having travelled by sea round south-eastern Asia and visited such places as Malay and Ceylon. Marco Polo's book describing his travels and the fabulous wealth of the east—the gold of Cathay and of Zipangu, or Japan (about which he had heard), the spices of the East Indies, and the pearls of Ceylon—had a great influence over men's minds and made them more eager than ever to reach the east.

On the west coast of Italy was the republic of Florence, famous for its manufactures of fine cloths and elaborate metalwork. Florence was also the biggest banking-centre of Europe, possessing in the fifteenth century as many as eighty great banking-houses. Banking was largely the invention of the north Italian cities, who found it indispensable for their commercial activities. To remind us of this we have Lombard Street in London, the home of English finance, whose name is derived from the bankers of north Italy, or Lombardy, who settled there in the Middle Ages. Such financial words as discount, deposit, and folio are also of Italian origin.

Florence was renowned towards the end of the Middle Ages for its devotion to literature and art. Its greatest son

in this connexion was the poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). Dante became involved in the party quarrels that rent Florence like all the other Italian cities, and spent twenty years of his life in exile. His greatest work was the *Divine Comedy*, a long epic poem that ranks him with such poets as the Roman Vergil or the Greek Homer. The *Divine Comedy* describes an imaginary visit to the other world. Under the guidance of Vergil Dante is led through the realms of Hell and Purgatory, where he sees the souls of the departed in various stages of anguish. Among those he places in the lower regions are some of the Popes, for Dante was a stern critic of their lives and looked to the emperor as the only person capable of rescuing Italy from its woes. In the third part of the book Dante is met by Beatrice, whose pure and beautiful character is based upon that of a woman he had loved in early life. Beatrice conducts him through the nine Heavens of Paradise to the very throne of God. The *Divine Comedy* is noteworthy in two respects: it sums up all that medieval men felt and thought about life in this world and the next; it was written in Italian, not Latin, and helped to make the spoken language of Italy into a great literary language. Dante died in exile at Ravenna, and his tomb bears the words in Latin, "Whom Florence bore, the mother that did little love him." Florence later regretted its treatment of its famous son. In the fifteenth century under the ruling family of the Medici it became the chief centre of art and literature in Italy and can worthily be regarded as 'the Athens of Italy.'

DANTE ALIGHIERI

From a fresco, somewhat restored, ascribed to the contemporary artist, Giotto. In the National Museum. Florence.

The Papal states and Naples had unhappy histories in the Middle Ages. During most of the fourteenth century the

Popes were absent from Rome, which was given over to strife between its ruling nobles. About 1350 a handsome youth of great eloquence, Rienzi, tried to revive the ancient Roman Republic and even had visions of a united Italy. Rienzi proclaimed himself tribune, like the ancient republican magistrates whose special duty it was to protect the common people. For several years Rienzi did good work; but he was sprung from the people and was hated by the nobles. Success also seems to have turned his head, and he became vain and pompous. Eventually his enemies brought about his downfall and death. The fortunes of Rome improved but little, if at all, with the later return of the Popes. The extensive state of Naples in the south was used by the Popes as a counter in their struggles against their enemies. Naples in consequence enjoyed little settled government and passed at different times under the rule of Normans, Germans, French, and Spaniards.

The political condition of Italy did not improve as time went on. Each state itself was disunited, let alone the whole country. Companies of mercenary soldiers found in its troubled condition an ideal ground for their activities. The dagger and the poisoned cup were the common means of getting rid of one's enemies. In time most of the cities fell under the control of tyrants, who, whatever their faults, did succeed in giving their subjects certain periods of rest from internal strife.

The Christian Reconquest of Spain

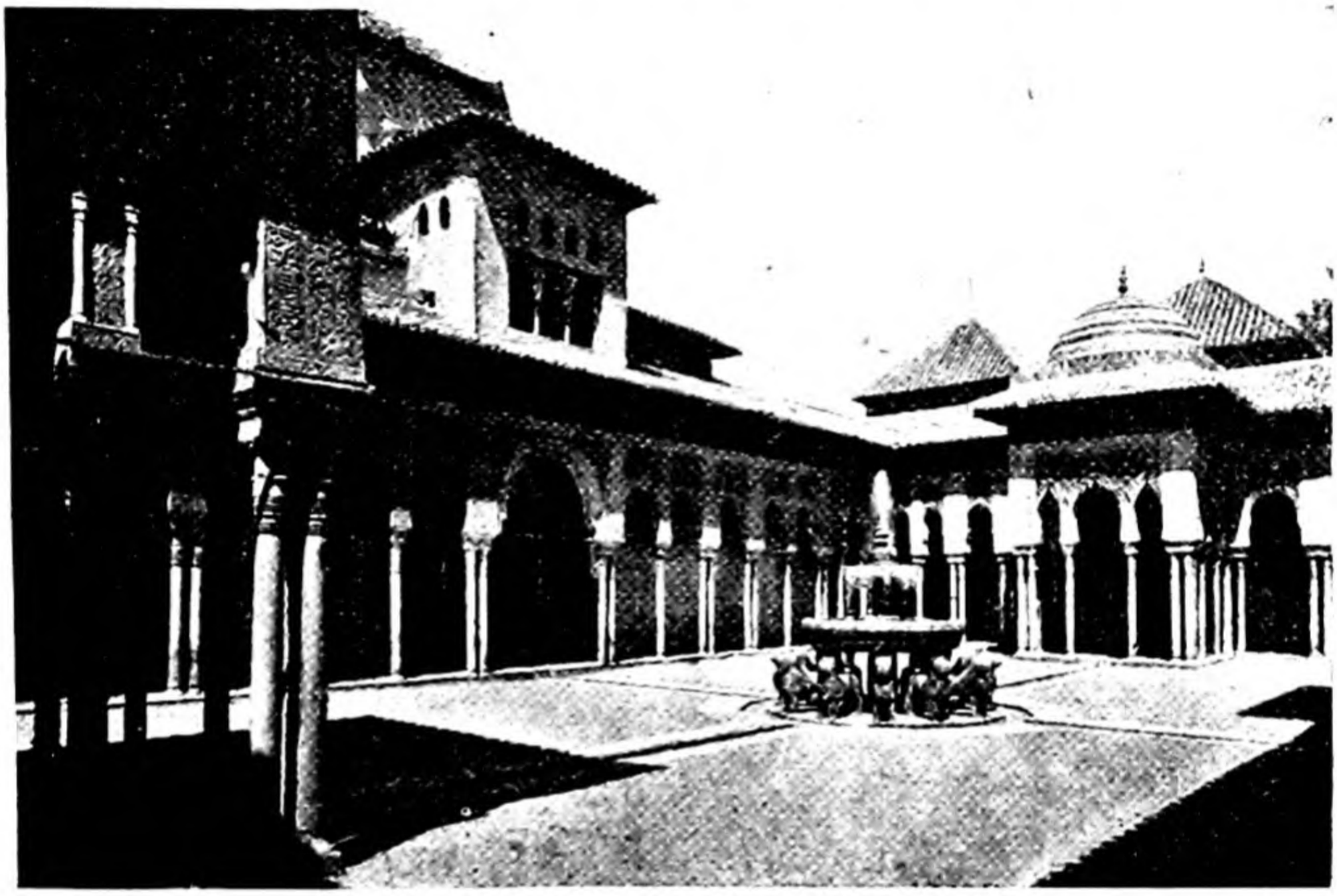
We saw how in the eighth century Spain was invaded by the Mohammedan Moors from North Africa. Spain is not an easy country to conquer; its mountain-ranges and steep river-valleys prevent easy communications and provide enemies with places of refuge. The extreme north-west of Spain never fell into the hands of the Moors, while Charlemagne, by establishing the Spanish March, prevented them from overflowing once more into France.

Nevertheless, the greater part of the peninsula was in Moorish hands for several centuries. Under the Moors Spain prospered. By canals and irrigation arid regions were turned into fertile plains, where rice, cotton, and oranges were grown. The towns of Toledo and Seville became famous for their steel. The Jews were better treated than in Christian countries, and helped in the development of industry and commerce and the advancement of learning. At Cordova grew up a university that attracted many Christian students anxious to learn through Arabic translations of the Greek philosopher, Aristotle.

The Christians in the north-west gradually formed themselves into states, and the history of Spain in the Middle Ages is largely the history of the expansion of these states. The most important states were Leon, Castile (so called from its many castles), Navarre, and Aragon; while along the west coast Portugal soon came into existence. Like most other countries, Spain has its national hero whose exploits are to some extent legendary. This was Rodrigo Diaz, better known as the Cid, or the chief. In legend the Cid was the embodiment of Christian chivalry and the terror of the Moors. In actual fact, although he was the greatest Spanish warrior in the Middle Ages and the terror of his enemies, he was by no means so single-minded as legend relates, and was ready, if it suited him, to fight in alliance with the Moors against the Christians. Perhaps the greatest tribute to his renown is the story of how, following his death in 1099, his soldiers set his dead body on his war-horse, with his sword Tizona bound in his hand, and led him forth to scatter the terrified Moors who were besieging Valencia.

Bit by bit the greater part of Spain was reconquered, and the wars against the Moors took on the nature of a Crusade. By 1300 Moorish rule was confined to the state of Granada, in the south. Spain was for long given over to feudal anarchy, as the wars had bred a type of mind that refused

to observe law and order. Gradually, however, Spain was unified, and a strong monarchy was developed. Leon and Castile had already united in 1230. In 1479 Aragon and Castile were united as a result of the marriage, ten years before, of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile. The



THE COURT OF LIONS, THE ALHAMBRA

The Alhambra was built by the Moorish monarchs of Granada between the years 1248 and 1354. Its name means 'the red castle,' from the colour of the bricks composing the walls. The columns shown in the illustration are of marble; likewise the twelve lions in the centre which support an alabaster basin.

Photo Anderson

state of Portugal, alone among these medieval Christian states, has kept its independence. Ferdinand and Isabella now ruled practically the whole of Spain, and their strong government crushed feudal turbulence. In 1492 the last Moorish state of Granada was conquered, and in the next century all Moors and Jews were expelled. This was a great loss to Spanish industry and commerce, though for long it was obscured by the supplies of precious metals that flowed into Spain from the New World. For in the same year as the conquest of Granada the West Indies were discovered by Christopher Columbus on behalf of Ferdinand and Isabella,

and Christian Spain was provided with new worlds to conquer.

The End of the Eastern Empire

If Christians had driven Mohammedans from Europe in the west, in the east the reverse was the case. In 1453 Constantinople or Byzantium fell into the hands of the Turks, and the eastern or Byzantine Empire came to an end.

The Byzantine Empire had lasted, with varying fortunes, throughout the Middle Ages. It had carried on the traditions of the old Roman Empire and for centuries had led the west in civilization. The Crusaders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had been regarded by the Byzantines as rough barbarians. The Crusaders in return had viewed their fellow-Christians as no better than heretics, for the Byzantines had developed their own eastern, or orthodox, form of Christianity. The Byzantine Empire had rendered valuable services to Europe. It had acted for centuries as a bulwark against Asiatic invaders. It had been a storehouse of learning, preserving much of the knowledge of the ancients till such time as the west was ready to receive it. The Byzantines lacked originality, being better able to preserve than create. Almost their only original contribution to civilization was their art and architecture. Byzantine mosaics, elaborate decorative work, and dome-capped buildings influenced Mohammedans and Christians alike in various parts of the Mediterranean world.

The Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages was often corrupt and badly governed. The Fourth Crusaders had found it easy to expel the Emperor and set up Latin Emperors of their own (see Chapter X). The Latin Empire lasted from 1204 to 1261, when a cruel and scheming Greek was able to win back the throne for the east.

Soon a more formidable enemy appeared—the Ottoman Turks, so-called from one of their early founders, Othman, who lived about 1300. The Ottoman Turks, aided in their

onslaughts by fanatical and fearless soldiers known as Janissaries, soon threatened the Empire. The Janissaries were Christian boys who had been captured or exacted as tribute and had been brought up in complete forgetfulness of their parentage and early training. In 1358 the Turks, having conquered practically all Asia Minor, obtained their

MOHAMMED II
A medal showing the strong face of the conqueror of Constantinople

first foothold in Europe, the famous Gallipoli peninsula, whence the allied efforts in the Great War of 1914–1918 failed to dislodge them. From Gallipoli the Turks conquered most of the Balkan peninsula, and by 1400 the eastern Emperor possessed little besides Constantinople and its surroundings.

Constantinople seemed doomed, as the west was too busy and too selfish to help it. For some years, however, it gained a breathing-space, as the Turks themselves were threatened by the Tartars from Asia, under their deformed leader, Tamerlane, a brutal one-armed creature. With the Tartar danger over, the Turks turned once more to the eastern Empire. In 1453 the Sultan Mohammed II laid siege to Constantinople. The outnumbered Christians put up a

brave resistance for two months, while the Turkish artillery battered down their walls. On May 29 the Turks broke through; a fearful slaughter ensued, the last Emperor himself being killed by the sword. Soon the crescent replaced the cross on the summit of Justinian's cathedral of St Sophia and proclaimed the end of the Byzantine Empire.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. What two important nations failed to unite into strong states during the Middle Ages? Can you give any reasons why?

2. What were (*a*) the good points, (*b*) the bad points, about the Italian city-states in the Middle Ages?

3. Write notes on: William Tell, the Cid, Janissaries.

4. What were the following men famous for: Marco Polo, Dante, Rienzi?

5. What services were rendered to Europe by the Byzantine Empire in the Middle Ages?

PART V
CONCLUSION

CHAPTER XIX
THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

The Fifteenth Century a Turning-point

The Middle Ages can be regarded as ending in the latter half of the fifteenth century. Divisions of history do not begin or end in one particular year; they merge into one another over more or less longer periods, like the stages in a person's life. Thus while the year 1400 is definitely in the Middle Ages, and the year 1600 definitely in the modern period, it is impossible to fix any particular year when the change took place. Broadly speaking, however, we can say that the change occurred during the years 1450–1500. Let us examine the events which make these years a turning-point in history.

The Growth of Strong Nations

The ancient world, during its last 500 years, had lived under the rule of Rome. The barbarian invasions had broken up this unity of government and thrown Europe into confusion. Feudalism had tried to find a remedy by strengthening the power of the local landowner; but feudalism had degenerated into anarchy and tyranny, and had become discredited. The Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire had sought a different remedy by carrying on the traditions of Rome and imposing a certain degree of unity upon Christendom. But this ideal, however noble in theory, had failed in practice to provide Europe with a form of government.

During the Middle Ages Europe had been groping after some intermediate form of government and had found it in the nation-state. This was an advance upon local feudalism, yet not as ambitious as the universal ideal of the Church and the Empire. By 1500 strong nation-states had arisen in England under the Tudors, in France under the Valois, in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella, whose country was soon to be linked up with the Hapsburg family of Austria. Smaller nations were being formed in Portugal, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. The Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark had become definite political units. Alone in western Europe Germany (the home of the Empire) and Italy (the home of the Papacy) showed no signs of developing into strong united states. It was with the new nation-states, and not with the old medieval makeshift forms of government or lofty ideals, that the future lay.

The Decay of Feudal Power

In countries where strong monarchies arose feudalism lost much of its power. The king and his ministers became the effective rulers of the country, declaring laws, dispensing justice, imposing taxation, and, above all, keeping the peace. The growing use of gunpowder made it easier for the king to batter down the castle walls of his nobles. The towns supported the king in this work, for the towns needed peace and settled government to develop their activities. By 1500 a prosperous middle class had arisen in many countries, drawing its wealth from the growing needs of commerce and industry, and opposed to feudal brigandage and warfare.

But although feudalism lost its *political* power throughout most of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it continued in other of its aspects right down to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By 1500 England had outgrown feudalism more than any other important country in Europe. The Wars of the Roses had killed off many of the nobles, and the Tudor kings dealt effectively with those who sur-

vived. We saw how the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 failed to abolish villeinage throughout the country. Yet by 1500 villeinage had practically disappeared in England; the English peasant was no longer a serf tied to the soil and working for his lord. This was the result of the enclosures for sheep-farming, of increasing commutation of services into money-rents, and of the growth of commerce and industry. But even where the villeins had become free, they still carried on their agriculture under the open three-field system, and the lord of the manor (who later often developed into the local squire) exercised much influence over them.

In other countries feudalism survived to a much greater degree. Many of the peasants remained in a state of serfdom, tied to the soil and owing all kinds of feudal dues and services to their lord. This lasted in France till the French Revolution of 1789, and in many other countries till even later. The strong kings who by 1500 had robbed their nobility of their powers of government did not usually interfere with feudal privileges and rights over the peasantry.

The Decline of the Catholic Church

Of all the characteristic institutions of the Middle Ages the Catholic Church alone was unbroken in the year 1500. Even so, it had lost much of the respect and support of Europe, and many of its most faithful members ardently desired reform.

We have seen how the Papacy moved to Avignon in the fourteenth century and came under the influence of France. In 1378 the 'Babylonish Captivity' came to an end—but only for worse to follow! A Pope was elected to return to Rome, whereupon some of the cardinals under French influence elected another Pope to remain at Avignon. Neither side would give way, and for the next 50 years Europe beheld the distressing spectacle of two rival lines of Popes, each line accusing the other of representing not

Christ but anti-Christ. Some countries supported one line of Popes, some supported the other; while many people began to wonder whether either line could really represent Christ on earth.

In such circumstances Wyclif's anti-Papal doctrines spread. They obtained a strong hold in Bohemia. There they were taken up by John Hus, a learned theologian of Prague University, who found much support among the Bohemians.

From 1414 to 1418 the Church at the Council of Constance made a great effort to re-establish its authority. Hus was summoned to appear before it and was found guilty of heresy. Although the Emperor had promised him a safe-conduct, he was burnt at the stake. The Council also succeeded in bringing the different lines of Popes to an end.

Although much of the mischief was thus repaired, distrust of the Church had gone too far to be easily uprooted. The followers of Hus, known as Hussites, took up arms, and bitter Crusades against them failed to stamp them out altogether. Catholic reformers supported by powerful monarchs endeavoured to bring the Papacy under the control of Church Councils. In this they failed, and the fifteenth century ended with the Papacy as strong as ever in theory. In actual fact, however, its position was very insecure. There were many things crying for reform: the lives of Popes and Church officials; the wealth of the Church, which contrasted so sharply with the poverty of Christ; Church doctrine, which learned men were showing was based partly on error; the interference of the Church in the affairs of the new nation-states.

The Church still commanded the allegiance of most men, and it was hoped that it could be reformed without breaking it up. On the other hand, some felt that only a complete break-away from it could mend matters. It was the latter who, in the sixteenth century, supported Martin Luther and John Calvin in their revolt from Rome. This revolt, known

as the Reformation, broke up the thousand-year old unity of Christendom and established the Protestant Churches.

The Renaissance or Rebirth of Learning

During the Dark Ages that succeeded the fall of Rome most of the knowledge of the ancients was neglected. It was only towards the end of the Middle Ages that men began to take much interest in the writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans. This marked the beginning of the Renaissance, or Rebirth of Learning. Even then the Greeks were studied mainly in Latin translations, and consequently some of their meaning was lost. After 1300 *national* literatures were also developed by writers like Dante in Italy and Chaucer in England.

In the fifteenth century the rediscovery of the ancients proceeded much further. Scholars, who feared the Turkish advance, came from Constantinople, bringing with them their own knowledge of Greek and often valuable manuscripts. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453 this exodus to western Europe became greater. The Italian city-states, with their keen intellectual life and their great wealth, attracted most of these scholars. Florence under the Medici became the leader of the Renaissance, but the Popes at Rome also encouraged the new learning. Pope Nicholas V began one of the greatest libraries in the world, the Vatican Library at Rome. Men searched in long-forgotten places for original manuscripts and were no longer contented with translations.

The revival of learning received a great impetus from the invention of printing and the manufacture of paper from linen rags. Both these arts had long been known in the Far East, where for many centuries books had been printed by means of movable type. For some time in Europe carved blocks of pictures and inscriptions had been used; but the first European known to have used movable type was John Gutenberg of Mainz, about 1450. Soon printing-presses

were established in other parts of Europe. At Venice Aldus Manutius established the famous Aldine press. William Caxton set up in 1476, under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, the first printing-press in England. His first book —the first printed in England—was the *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* in 1477.

AN EARLY PRINTING-PRESS

Enlarged from the printer's mark of I. B. Ascensius. Used on the title-pages of books printed by him, 1507–1535.

The printing-press completely altered the character of the Renaissance. Books could now be produced more cheaply and in hitherto undreamt-of numbers. It is estimated that by 1500 there were about eight million printed books in existence. The discoveries of scholars were thus placed within the reach of a far wider circle of readers, and became a permanent part of man's inheritance.

The Age of Geographical Discovery

In the Middle Ages the east was regarded as the treasure-house of the world, the home of precious metals and stones, of spices and perfumes. Marco Polo's book confirmed this view. New ways to the east were desired, especially as the growing Turkish power in the eastern Mediterranean made the old routes dangerous.

The introduction of the mariner's compass (possibly from China) made longer voyages safer. A Portuguese prince, named Henry the Navigator, sought a way to the east down the coast of Africa, and every year Portuguese sailors ven-

tured farther and farther south. By Prince Henry's death in 1463 they had reached the Gold Coast. In 1471 they crossed the Equator. In 1486 Bartholomew Diaz reached the Cape of Good Hope—called by him Cape of Storms until the Portuguese King altered its name to one of better omen.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS
Biblio.eca National, Madrid.
The oldest known portrait of Columbus.

In 1498 the good hopes came true; Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape, and with the aid of an Arab pilot he crossed the Indian Ocean and reached India and the Spice Islands.

Meanwhile a Genoese sailor, Christopher Columbus, convinced that the world was round, had sought the east across the Atlantic and had reached the West Indies (1492). He believed to his death that he had reached Asia by sailing west—hence the name given to his discovery. In reality, he had discovered a New World for the country that employed him, Spain.

The stage was now set for European expansion to America and the far east, for world commerce, for the establishment of overseas empires, and for the rivalries and wars that they

produced—and still unhappily produce. Mankind was fast leaving the Middle Ages behind and entering upon a new era of human history.

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

1. Write notes upon: John Hus, Prince Henry the Navigator, Gutenberg of Mainz, William Caxton.

2. How far had feudalism decayed by the year 1500?

3. What do you consider was (*a*) the strength, (*b*) the weakness, of the Catholic Church in the year 1500?

4. How, briefly, did the fall of Constantinople in 1453 affect (*a*) the Renaissance, (*b*) the geographical discoveries?

APPENDIX

TIME-CHART OF BRITAIN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD

Year	Events in the British Isles	Events in Other Lands
4000 B.C.	From 10,000 B.C. New Stone Age (Iberian men)	From 4000 B.C. rise of civilization in Egypt and Mesopotamia
3000 B.C.		3000 B.C. to 2500 B.C. Pyramid Age in Egypt From 3000 B.C. rise of civilization in Crete
2000 B.C.	1800 B.C. beginning of Bronze Age 1700 B.C. Stonehenge erected	1200 B.C. Hebrews settle in Canaan
1000 B.C.	700 B.C. First Celtic invasion (Gaels) 400 B.C. Second Celtic invasion (Brythons) 400 B.C. beginning of Iron Age 325 B.C. Pytheas' voyage to Britain 55 B.C. Julius Caesar's visit to Britain	From 1000 B,C. rise of Phoenician commerce 753 B.C. founding of Rome 500 B.C. Persian Empire 500 B.C. to 400 B.C. height of Greek civilization 336 B.C. to 323 B.C. Alexander the Great 100 B.C. to 44 B.C. life o. Julius Caesar 31 B.C. Roman Empire founded
Birth of Christ	A.D. 43 beginning of Roman Conquest 122 Hadrian's Wall 410 Romans leave Britain	A.D. 30 beginning of Christ's teaching 306–337 Constantine the Great 378 beginning of serious barbarian invasions 476 fall of Rome; end of Western Empire

N.B. Many of the earlier dates are only approximate

TIME-CHART OF THE MIDDLE

Centurie	The British Isles	France	Church and Italy
	449 Jutes in Kent		476 fall of Rome 493–526 Theodoric King of Italy
500		496 Clovis becomes Christian	
	520 Arthur's victory at Mount Badon		529 Rule of St Benedic
	563 St Columba at Iona		568 Lombards invade Italy
	577 British defeat at Deorham		
			590–604 Pope Gregory the Great
600	597 St Augustine in Kent		
	613 British defeat at Chester 627 Paulinus in Northumbria 635 Aidan in Northumbria	'Do-Nothing' kings in France	
	664 Synod of Whitby 669–690 Theodore Archbishop of Canterbury		
700			
	731 Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*	732 Charles Martel at Tours	
	757–796 Offa King o Mercia	751 Pepin (first Carolingian) 768 Charlemagne King of the Franks	
	787 beginning of Danish raids		
800		800 Charlemagne Emperor	
	802–839 Egbert King of Wessex	814 death of Charlemagne	
	851 first Danish settlement	843 Treaty of Verdun	
	871–900 King Alfred 878 Treaty of Wedmore	888 end of Charlemagne's Empire	
900			
		911 Northmen in Normandy	910 Congregation of Cluny
	959–975 King Edgar 960–988 Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury 978–1016 Ethelred the Redeless	987 Hugh Capet King of France	
1000			

EMPIRE AND GERMANY	EASTERN EMPIRE, ISLAM, AND CRUSADES	SPAIN AND OTHER LANDS
476 end of Western Empire		
	527–565 Justinian: Codes of law and reconquest of part of the west 570 birth of Mohammed	Visigoths settle in Spain
	622 Mohammed's flight to Medina (The Hegira) 632 death of Mohammed Mohammedan conquests in Syria, India, and North Africa	
	711 Mohammedans invade Spain 732 Mohammedans defeated at Tours	711 Mohammedans invade Spain
800 Charlemagne revives Empire		
	827 Mohammedans conquer Sicily	Viking Raids and Settlements throughout Europe
888 end of Charlemagne's Empire		
924 last 'Emperor' (in Italy) 936–973 Otto I King of Germany 955 Magyars defeated at River Lech 962 Otto revives Empire		1000 Norsemen in America

TIME-CHART OF THE MIDDLE

Centuries	The British Isles	France	Church and Italy
	1017–1035 King Canute		
	1042–1066 Edward the Confessor		1054 E. and W. Churches separate
	1066 Hastings		1073–1085 Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand)
	1086 *Domesday Book*		1077 Emperor of Canossa
	1087 death of William I		
	1100 death of William Rufus		1098 monastery of Citeaux founded
1100			
	1106 Henry I and Anselm settle Investiture Dispute		
	1135–1154 anarchy under Stephen		1122 Investiture Dispute settled at Worms
			1153 death o. St Bernard
	1154–1189 Henry II's reforms		
	1170 death of Becket		
	1189–1199 Richard the Lion-Heart	1180–1223 Philip Augustus	1198–1216 Pope Innocent III
1200			
	1213 John's submission to the Pope	1204 England loses Normandy	
	1215 Magna Carta	1214 Philip's victory at Bouvines	1210 Franciscans founded
		1226–1270 Louix IX (St Louis)	1218 Dominicans founded
	1258 Provisions of Oxford		
	1265 Simon de Montfort's Parliament		1274 death of Thomas Aquinas
	1284 Edward I annexes Wales		
	1295 Edward I's Model Parliament		
	1298 Edward I defeats Wallace	1285–1314 Philip the Fair	1294 death of Roger Bacon
1300			
	1314 Edward II defeated at Bannockburn		1316 Dante's *Divine Comedy*
	1337 beginning of Hundred Years' War (see next column)	1328 end of Capetians; beginning of Valois	1309–1377 Popes at Avignon ('Babylonish Captivity')
	1348–1349 Black Death throughout Europe	1340 Battle of Sluys	1350 Rienzi's Roman Republic
		1346 Battle of Crécy	
		1356 Battle of Poitier	1378 beginning of rival lines of Popes (Great Schism)
	1381 Peasants' Revolt		
	1384 death of Wyclif		
	1387 *Canterbury Tales*		
1400	1399 Richard II deposed		
	1403 Henry IV's victory at Shrewsbury		
	1413–1422 Henry V	1415 Battle of Agincourt	1414–1418 Council of Constance—John Hus burnt; Great Schism ended
		1429 Joan of Arc	
		1453 end of Hundred Years' War	
	1455 beginning of Wars of Roses		
	1461–1483 Edward IV		
	1476 Caxton's Printing Press		
	1485 Bosworth—end of Wars of Roses		
	1485–1509 Henry VII (Tudor		
1500			

Empire and Germany	Eastern Empire, Islam, and Crusades	Spain and Other Lands
AGES—(II) 1000–1500		
1056–1106 Emperor Henry IV	1054 E. and W. Churches separate	
1077 Henry IV's penitence at Canossa	1076 Turks capture Jerusalem	
	1099 1st Crusaders recapture Jerusalem	1099 death of the Cid
1122 end of Investiture Dispute	1113 Knights of St John founded	
	1128 Knights of the Temple founded	
1152–1190 Emperor Frederick Barbarossa	1147 Second Crusade	
1190 death of Barbarossa on Third Crusade	1189–92 Third Crusade (Richard I, Philip Augustus, Barbarossa)	
1212–1250 Emperor Frederick II	1204 Fourth Crusade (Latin Empire in East established)	
	1212 Children's Crusade	1230 union of Leon and Castile
1273 Rudolph of Hapsburg elected Emperor	1261 end of Latin Empire in East	
		1271 beginning of Marco Polo's journey
1291 beginning of Swiss Confederation		
	1300 rise of Ottoman Turks	
	1312 Knights of the Temple dissolved	
1356 Golden Bull regulating Imperial elections	1358 Ottoman Turks reach Europe	
1450 Printing Press of John Gutenberg of Mainz	1453 Turks capture Constantinople	1463 death of Henry the Navigator
		1479 union of Aragon and Castile
		1492 Moors expelled from Granada
		1492 Columbus discovers America
		1498 Vasco da Gama reaches India

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